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THE
FENS AND FLOODS
OF
MID-LINCOLNSHIRE;

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF
THE RIVER WITHAM,
IN ITS NEGLECTED STATE BEFORE 1762, AND ITS IMPROVEMENTS UP
TO 1825.

WITH MAPS, PLANS, &c.

BY
JAMES SANDBY PADLEY,
LINCOLN,
COUNTY SURVEYOR OF ROADS AND BRIDGES, &c., FOR THE DIVISION OF LINDSEY.

LINCOLN :
C. AKRILL, HIGH STREET AND SILVER STREET.
MDCCCLXXXII.

TO
WESTON CRACROFT AMCOTTS, ESQUIRE, J.P.,

COLONEL COMMANDING FIRST LINCOLNSHIRE RIFLE VOLUNTEERS,

OF HACKTHORN HALL, NEAR LINCOLN,

THIS WORK, BY PERMISSION, IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE MANY ACTS OF KINDNESS RECEIVED BY

HIS OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

The Author of this work having had an exceptionally long and intimate connection with the districts referred to therein, has gathered together many facts relative to the Floods and Rivers of the Fenny Parts of Mid-Lincolnshire, which most probably would soon fade from human recollection, were they not fixed by being published ; he confesses to a strong desire to preserve his gatherings, in the hope that the knowledge of past works of drainage, &c., may be of service to owners and occupiers of land in future years, and he would fain hope that the personal memoranda which he has interwoven with other details may, in many instances, be found interesting to the descendants of those persons who were concerned therewith.

The Author asks that he may be permitted to show that he has some excuse for holding himself well acquainted with the country to which this work refers, and in the first place, he would mention his connection with the Ordnance Survey.

Lincolnshire was surveyed somewhat earlier than it was originally intended to be, owing to the following circumstance.—

The Duke of Rutland's Agent (Mr. William King,) had made a plan of the Belvoir Hunt in 1804, which was found to be of great convenience to those interested in it, and the gentlemen forming the Burton Hunt, about the year 1818, under the presidency of the Lord

Lieutenant of the County (Earl Brownlow), were desirous of having a plan of the Burton Hunt likewise. Being aware that the Great Ordnance Survey of England and Wales was then going forward, his lordship suggested that the Ordnance Office authorities (His Grace the Duke of Wellington being then the Master-General,) should be applied to, to ascertain if the survey of Lincolnshire could be undertaken at once; the reply was to the effect that the Surveyors were then engaged in parts distant from Lincolnshire, viz. Shropshire, and could not be removed therefrom without disadvantage, nevertheless if it could be guaranteed that five hundred copies of the map of Lincolnshire would be subscribed for at five guineas each, they would bring their Surveyors and set them at work immediately. The gentlemen of the county and neighbourhood entered heartily into the matter,—Lord Brownlow, we believe, making himself responsible for the amount,—and the work was commenced in 1819, from which time it was prosecuted without cessation until completed.

At the time of writing this (1881), but few persons are aware of the immense labour this survey entailed, or of the scientific knowledge essential to accuracy. The first proceeding in connection with it, was the measuring with extreme care of a base line, four miles in length, on Hommslow Heath; this was performed under the superintendence of General Mudge, being tested in a variety of ways, with a multiplicity of instruments, among which were rods of wood and glass, and steel chains—the latter especially absorbed an immense amount of time and scientific labour to attain perfect correctness. From this base, the great angles were carried out, throughout England, and even extended to France; the trigonometrical survey being completed by General Mudge. The camps for this purpose were fixed in places commanding extensive views of country,—for instance, one was at Stathern Point in Leicestershire (near Belvoir Castle), another at Holland Hill, near Nottingham, and a third on Gringley Hill, near Gainsborough. During the time General Mudge occupied the camp at the latter station, he had a line of verification measured, close

to the camp in the Isle of Axholme, and, as a proof of the marvellous care taken in the survey, it was found to be within one foot of absolute accuracy! Speaking more especially of Lincolnshire, the position of the great tower of Lincoln Cathedral was determined from the above-named three points, and from it and other points minor angles were obtained throughout the county by the Royal Engineers, and supplied to the Sub-Surveyors and Engineers employed in the survey.

One of the Engineers brought from Shropshire was Captain Stevens, by whom the Author was engaged as assistant in his portion of the survey, first near Alford, and then in the Lincoln District,—the latter being in the form of a square, extending from Wragby to Southwell (Notts.), and from Dunsby Lane to Spital; of this part the Author surveyed nearly the whole of the main roads during the years 1819 and 1820, Captain Stevens making the plans and sketching in the hills. &c. The Author also assisted him in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and other counties. The plan when laid down by the Surveyors was on a scale of two inches to a mile, afterwards reduced by the Engineers to one inch to a mile, as published. After the Surveyor's plans were completed, they were tested on the spot by the Royal Engineers; the Author has satisfaction in saying that Captain Stevens' work was found so accurate that, as a reward, his salary was augmented, while the Author received a copy of the map as a present, in token of the Department's approval of his share of the work done.

The Ordnance maps being projected in squares, are intended to fit together as one complete map of England and Wales, and have proved of inestimable value to the present generation, more especially in the carrying out of railway works.

The Author afterwards settled at Lincoln as a Surveyor and Engineer; after having surveyed the fine estates of the late Charles Chaplin, Esq., near Louth, as well as at Temple

Bruer and Blankney Fen, having also made general plans of his estates near Lincoln, he was, by that gentleman, recommended as successor to the late William Hayward, Esq., in the post of Surveyor of County Bridges, of the Division of Lindsey in Lincolnshire. He became Surveyor of the Sewers for the Lincoln District, and was also elected to the Surveyorship of the Turnpike Roads in the Lincoln District,—the latter post he resigned some years ago; the offices connected with the Sewers and Bridges he still holds, after a sixty years' occupancy, being now—he gratefully acknowledges—allowed to perform their duties principally by deputy.*

Several Acts of Parliament bearing upon the subject, Dugdale's scarce works, more especially as referring to Sir Anthony Thomas and his co-partners' labours, John Grundy (of Spalding), Marrat's *History of Lincolnshire*, Thompson's *History of Boston*, Scribo, &c., are largely quoted; these books being not readily accessible to the general reader, it is believed that the extracts will be both instructive and acceptable.

In conclusion, the Author would bespeak the kind indulgence of his readers; his profession has not been authorship in any sense of the word,—his life having been passed in the active duties of his profession, and, he hopes, in the assiduous performance of the labours devolving upon his tenure of the public posts referred to above.

BROADGATE, LINCOLN,

August 13th, 1881.

* The Author died at Skegness, on the Lincolnshire Coast, on the 18th August, 1881, in the ninetieth year of his age, having finished the preface to this work on the 13th of the same month.

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PLAN N^o 1.

(From Ordnance



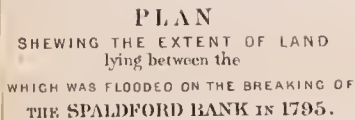
FLOODS OF MID-LINCOLNSHIRE.

BEFORE the time of the Romans every flood of the Trent flowed down to Lincoln, through the valley thereof, eastward over the flat land between the Carr Dyke and the foot of the Wold Hills, and then through the Wildmore, West and East Fens ; spreading southwards, a portion of the flood-water extended to Little Hale and Bicker Fens, and flowed from thence into the sea at Boston Haven ; whilst the remaining and greater portion was uttered through the valley called the North Dyke, between Stickney and Sibsey into the East Fen, and passed into the sea at Friskney and Wainfleet Havens.

A range of low sand hills extends from the village of Girton, in Nottinghamshire, to Marton Cliff, in Lincolnshire. It is not generally known that there are five openings in this line of hills (see plan I.), through which, in remote ages, the waters of the Trent flowed over the vast tract of low-lying land between that river and the east coast of Lincolnshire, as described in the previous paragraph. Were it not for the banks which now fill up those openings, and which will be hereafter particularized, this river would still cover the country with its waters, carrying with them a large quantity of the sand of which the hills are mainly composed, and depositing it upon the low flat parts. That the flood-water of the Trent did this in the olden time is plainly shown by the fact that recent excavations exhibit a thick layer of sand which extends through Lincoln to the entrance to the Fen in the parish of Washingborough. In the lowest parts this forms a strata nine feet deep.

The first of the five openings alluded to is in the township of Spaldford ; the second, in the parish of Newton ; the third, near the south side of the Foss Dyke, at its entrance into the Trent ; the fourth, in the parish of Torksey, beginning on the north of the church, and extending to the high ground at the distance of three hundred yards ; and the fifth, in the township of Brampton.

(From Ordnance Survey)



and flooded, and under the jurisdiction of }
the Lincoln Court of Sewers. } coloured Blue
No II: under the jurisdiction of }
the Newark Court of Sewers. } coloured Red

Scale—1 inch to a Mile.

Doubtless these openings were embanked by the Romans, but since their time, being neglected, the banks have broken at different periods, and allowed the flood-water to inundate the country down to Lincoln, and so into the Fens.

THE SPALDFORD BANK is the most dangerous of the five, as it is higher up the valley of the Trent, and consequently has a greater fall for the water into the low land towards Lincoln. It extends in length upwards of a mile, and is from twelve to fifteen feet high for a considerable distance.

This bank broke at Candlemas, 1795, and flooded great part of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. This flood was occasioned solely by the melting of snow; a severe frost had continued for about two months, the snow accumulating to an average depth of fifteen inches. The thaw commenced on Saturday, February 7th, at noon, and (surprising to relate,) acquired its utmost height at Torksey, without any rainfall, on the Wednesday following, at about ten o'clock in the morning. This rapid rise may in some degree be accounted for thus: the earth at that time having lost its power of absorption, by reason of the frost remaining in the ground, the water would be carried down, as it were on an inclined plane of glass. The flood proves to have been thirteen inches higher at Newark, and six inches higher at Torksey, than that which happened in 1770.

We here reprint a full account of this flood, written by the author, and inserted in the *Lincoln, Notts, and North Midland Times*, September 14th, 1858.

“ SPALDFORD BANK FLOOD, CANDLEMAS, 1795.

“ To the Editor of *The Lincoln Times*.

“ SIR,—Having been engaged, in conjunction with Mr. Bausor, in ascertaining and making a survey of the lands flooded by the breaking of the Spaldford Bank in 1795, I conceive a few particulars relating to the same may be interesting to the public.

“ The bank in question is situated on the side of the high road leading from Girton to South Clifton, Nottinghamshire, one mile east of the River Trent, and is in length one mile and a half. The top of the bank for a considerable distance is ten feet above the land adjoining. This bank is of very ancient date, and no doubt was originally a Roman work; a bank in this situation is, and always has been, of the greatest consequence to the country

east of it ; indeed, from old maps, and on examination of the face of the country towards Lincoln, and so on to the sea, it is not unfair to suppose that the Trent may have had its outfall in part into the German Ocean from this place through Lincoln and the Fens to Wainfleet Haven (or at least a branch of it) ; the name of the township in which it is situate—‘ Spaldford ’ or ‘ Spreadford ’—also indicates that there was a ford here in some remote age, where nothing of the kind exists now ; in fact, there is no run of water.

“ This flood, which took place at the time before stated, covered nearly twenty thousand acres west of Lincoln. At that time the low lands in Boultham, Skellingthorpe, Burton, North and South Carlton, and Broxholme, were mere swamps, covered with water the greater part of the year ; Saxelby, Broadholme, Harby, Wigsley, Thorney, Kettlethorpe, Fenton, and Spaldford Moors were then open, growing only gorse and ling ; so that the damage then would bear no comparison with the damage that would take place at the present time, for since that period the low lands have all been drained and inclosed. The moors have also been inclosed, and the whole district brought into cultivation. I have had very great pleasure in noticing the heavy crops of corn growing on these lands this year, bearing satisfactory testimony to the efforts towards improvement put forth by landowners and occupiers. The crops of wheat which I saw must yield upon an average at least from four to six quarters to the acre, and other crops in the same proportion. This being the case, it must come home to every one, particularly to those in the district affected by the flood, that the loss must have been immense, for to take the crops (supposing a flood to have come like the one in August, 1828, and the bank to have broken,) at six pounds per acre, net loss, the amount would be one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, besides the value of the cattle destroyed, and the heavy loss through the land being injured for several years. Since the inclosure of the lands before named, several houses and farmsteads have been built in Lincoln, Boultham, Skellingthorpe, Burton, Saxelby, Hardwick, Torksey, Fenton, Kettlethorpe, &c., now standing from five to six feet under the flood-mark of 1795 ; so that the loss and inconvenience at the present time would be something terrible.

“ People living at a distance from the bank, and not having had an opportunity of understanding the danger they were in, are often indifferent about the matter, and would rest in the same way as an old lady named Bowker, did at Besthorpe, in the flood of 1875. The water continued rising in the village, and first one neighbour and then another kept coming into the old lady’s room, and warning her that she would have to remove, but as

the water never had been in the house during her lifetime, she took no notice of such warnings, and laughed at their fears, saying she ‘would trust to Providence.’ However the water very soon came into the house, and the old lady had to be taken out. So in many cases, people would not be convinced of danger until the calamity came upon them.

“The bank is formed upon a plain of a sandy nature, and when it was broken in 1795, the water forced an immense breach, the size of which may be judged from the fact that eighty loads of faggots and upwards of four hundred tons of earth were required to fill up the hole, an operation which took several weeks to complete.

“The water found its way to Lincoln, but the High Street being raised more than ten feet above the level of the adjoining lands became a dam and stop to the flood, causing it to remain above Lincoln. Failing of egress by its ancient outlet, the water spread out like a lake over the twenty thousand acres before alluded to, and continued to cover them for nearly three weeks. I have ascertained that the flood-mark at that time was nearly eight feet above the ordinary height of water in the Fossdyke, or ten feet above the present level of the land.

“Many of the houses in Saxelby were flooded, and the families had to be removed to the upper town,—indeed, several of them had to live in the church; Broxholme, Broadholme, Hardwick, Hathow, Thorney, Fenton, Kettlethorpe, and Wigsley, were cut off from all communication with other parts except by boats. The villages of Torksey, Brampton, Fenton, Kettlethorpe, and, as stated above, the lower parts of Saxelby, were flooded.

“There is no endowment for keeping up the bank in question, nor individuals liable to its repair. After the breach of 1795, there appears to have been a spontaneous move of the inhabitants in the neighbourhood to assist in filling up the gap; but since that time the bank has been neglected and suffered to fall into decay, and danger was not fully developed until November 18th, 1852, at the time of the Duke of Wellington’s funeral, when a great flood was in the valley of the Trent; it rose to the top of the bank and commenced to run over. Then the danger became apparent, and the inhabitants of the District alarmed for their lives and property; had not the Dunham bank, on the opposite side of the river, given way just at this time, no doubt this bank must have gone; as it was, if there had been a strong south-west wind at the time, no human power could have saved it. Mr. Nevile, of Thorney, was soon upon the spot; he found plenty of men ready to assist in cradling the

bank, but they would not commence until it was understood by whom they were to be paid. Mr. Nevile, seeing the great danger, and that not a moment was to be lost, set about one hundred men to work ; and such was the danger at the time (there being a breast of ten feet of water on the west side of the bank and none on the other), that, had it broken, several of the men must have been swept away, and doubtless would have lost their lives.

“ After all this, a searching enquiry was set on foot to find out if any party or parties were liable to the repairing of the bank, but without success.*

“ Then, meetings were called of all parties interested, and it was resolved to ask for subscriptions to accomplish the work. A few were set down, but the amount required could not be raised, therefore that scheme was abandoned. At last the author suggested to the Rev. Mr. Atkinson, of Kettlethorpe, that the Court of Sewers was the proper authority to carry out the work of repair, and to charge the expense thereof upon all lands protected by the bank. In consequence, a petition was presented to the Court.†

“ The process of a view by the Commissioners of Sewers has taken place, reports thereon, surveys, and plans with reference of all the lands named have been made. Inquisitions have been held before a County and a City Jury, and in each case verdicts have been found that such lands are liable to repair the banks in question.

“ The following is the quantity of land in each parish and township that would be inundated by a flood occurring at the present time, taken six inches below the flood mark of 1795 :—LINCOLNSHIRE :—Brampton, 432a. 1r. 31p. ; Boutham, 618a. 1r. 16p. ; Burton and Hathow, 965a. 0r. 7p. ; Broxholme, 875a. 1r. 16p. ; South Carlton, 522a. 0r. 27p. ; North Carlton, 351a. 0r. 37p. ; Lincoln, 484a. 2r. 30p. ; Skellingthorpe, 2,289a. 1r. 12p. ; Doddington, 233a. 0r. 20p. ; Saxelby with Ingoldby, 1,877a. 0r. 21p. ; Marton, 228a. 2r. 0p. ; Scampton, 114a. 0r. 15p. ; North Scarle, 714a. 0r. 9p. ; Swinethorpe, 307a. 3r. 12p. ; Torksey

* Up to this time it was generally imagined that Sir William Earle Welby, Bart., was responsible for the repair of the bank, he being the owner of the Spaldford Estate ; Sir William, however, invariably denied his liability,—and, as a matter of fact, it was never proved that he was liable. Mr. Nevile, however, believing in his responsibility, had incurred a liability of about one hundred pounds,—this sum Sir William eventually refunded.

† The Author advised the Rev. Mr. Atkinson to proceed by petition to the Courts of Sewers at Lincoln and Newark. Very few names were attached to it, among those however were the signatures of Mr. Atkinson himself, Mr. John Francis Burton, and his late father. As shown hereafter, the result was the placing of the whole district under the Commissioners of Sewers sitting at Lincoln and Newark respectively.

with Hardwick, 1,019a. 0r. 19p. ; Stow Park, 135a. 3r. 39p. ; Newton, 659a. 2r. 13p. ; Laughterton, 119a. 2r. 7p. ; Fenton, 569a. 3r. 12p. ; Kettlethorpe, 1,014a. 3r. 4p. ; total in Lincolnshire, 13,532a. 0r. 27p. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE :—Girton, 19a. 2r. 2p. ; Spaldford, 787a. 1r. 20p. ; South Clifton, 451a. 3r. 26p. ; North Clifton, 361a. 1r. 32p. : Harby, 477a. 1r. 13p. ; Wigsley, 887a. 1r. 29p. ; Broadholme, 360a. 2r. 33p. ; Thorney, 1,830a. 0r. 27p. ; total in Nottinghamshire, 5,175a. 3r. 22p. Total in both counties, 18,708a. 0r. 9p.

“ The following evidences I have collected from old people during the progress of my survey.—

“ Mr. John Wistow, now living at Burton by Lincoln, eighty-eight years of age, remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, and the flood in 1795. The water came up Burton Fen-lane, east of the Fen-house, which was several feet deep in water.

“ Mr. Joseph Coxen, now living at South Carlton by Lincoln, seventy-six years of age, remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, and the flood of 1795. The water came up the Fen-lane, east of the old Decoy House, and the said house was several feet deep in water ; the occupier having to remove to the village. All the country down to Lincoln was flooded.

“ William Taylor, born at Broxholme, and now living at 43, Rasen Lane, Lincoln, sixty-nine years of age, remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, and the flood in 1795. The water came up to the fireplace in his father's house, at Broxholme, situate about two hundred yards north of the Churchyard. Broxholme was surrounded by water, and had no communication whatever with other part except by boats. The water was knee-deep in the Rev. Mr. Bassett's kitchen. The lower parts of North Carlton, South Carlton, and Burton were flooded. The water remained about three weeks.

“ Mrs. Mary Millns, now living at Skellingthorpe, in the same house in which she was born, is ninety-three years of age ; remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, and the consequent flood, at Candlemas, 1795. The water came through the Wood with a roaring noise, like the report of thunder : it came up to the Rundle Corner, in the village, near the May-pole ; she went in a boat from the said Corner with other people to Lincoln market, over hedge and ditch. This boat took people to market for three successive Fridays before the water subsided. Ten calves, in Skellingthorpe Ox Pasture, a mile north of the village, were on a small hill surrounded by the water, and had to remain until a lighter boat was procured

at Lincoln, and taken to their rescue. Her husband assisted, and he said the calves bellowed, and were so alarmed at their situation that it took no trouble to get them into the boat, “for they walked in of themselves, like Christians.” They were landed at Joseph Tagg’s garden, near the said Rundle Corner. The low lands were flooded for miles.

“Mr. Joseph Tagg, now living in the same cottage in which he was born, in Skellingthorpe, is seventy-six years of age; remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, and the flood of 1795. The water came through Skellingthorpe Wood, making a roaring noise; it came up to the corner of his garden, called Rundle Corner. He remembered Mr. Tenney’s calves being fetched from the Ox Pasture in a lighter boat, and landed at the said Corner as spoken to by Mrs. Millns. All the low country was flooded down to Lincoln.

“Mr. Joseph Durance, of the City of Lincoln, seventy years of age, remembers the flood from the Spaldford Bank breaking in 1795. The water was on a level with the High Street, and run over the same near the Cornhill. The water covered all the low lands west of Lincoln. Saw old Mr. Cuttill sailing in his boat. He, with other people, frequently walked up the New Road, on the side of the hill, to take a view of the water, which appeared like a little sea.

“Mr. Edward Cavill, of Saxelby, is 75 years of age: remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, and the flood, Candlemas, 1795. The water came into his father’s house and shop in Saxelby, and into the “Sun” public-house, as high as the top of the lower sash of the window. Barrels were placed on their ends, and planks laid from one to the other in the house to walk upon. A boat swam out of the river over the turnpike road, round the north approach to Saxelby bridge. Several of the inhabitants removed to the higher part of the town, and many of them had to live in the church. The water remained about three weeks.

“Mr. William Harrison, of Saxelby, is upwards of seventy years of age; remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, and the flood, Candlemas, 1795. The water came into his father’s house, at Saxelby; it flooded the streets and lower part of the village. At the “Sun” public-house the water was level with the top of bottom sash of window, or nearly so. Barrels were set on end, and planks laid on the same for people to walk upon in the house. He went in a boat with Mr. Ellis, the miller, cadging, to Broxholme, on the flood. The water remained out for three weeks. People were flooded out of their houses, and several families had to live in the church. The fear that Spaldford Bank would break had alarmed the inhabitants for a day or two previous, and people were all on the watch, when

the water came roaring over the moor ; his sister was the first person in the family that heard the noise.

“ Mr. Richard Keyworth, of Saxelby, is sixty-nine years of age and upwards ; remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking, Candlemas, 1795. The water came into his father’s house. A boat went round the north approach to the bridge, as mentioned by Mr. Cavill. He fully corroborated Mr. Cavill’s testimony in other respects. The water went up the lower town street as far as Mrs. Anderson’s house.

“ Mr. John Rook, of Saxelby, upwards of sixty-eight years of age, remembers the flood, at Candlemas, 1795, resulting from the breaking of the Spaldford Bank. The water came up the town street as far as Mr. Capes’ gate and Mrs. Anderson’s house. The people being flooded out of their houses, had to remove to the upper part of the village, wherever they could get accommodated ; and several families lived in the church. The flood lasted about three weeks.

“ Mr. Christopher Thorpe, of North Searle, aged seventy-seven years, remembers the flood, when the Spaldford Bank broke, at Candlemas, 1795. The water came up the Spaldford Road, as far as the pinfold in North Searle village.

“ Mr. Richard Simms lives in North Searle ; is upwards of eighty-two years of age ; remembers the flood in 1795 ; the water came up to the footpath leading from North Searle to Harby, at the corner of Tubb Close.

“ Mr. John Wells, of Brampton, seventy-three years of age, speaks of the flood and the Spaldford Bank breaking in 1795. The water came into his kitchen as high as the oven ; all the houses in Brampton were flooded except Mrs. Wakefield’s and Mrs. Nicholson’s.

“ Mr. George Cotterill, of Torksey, is eighty-one years of age ; remembers the flood and Spaldford Bank breaking in 1795. The water came up to the churchyard at Torksey, and along the Gainsborough and Newark Road to within twelve yards of the house he then lived in ; nearly all the houses in Torksey were flooded.

“ Mr. Benjamin Makins, senior, of Torksey, remembers the Spaldford Bank breaking ; the water came into his father’s house two feet deep. Can remember being boated along the town street to his uncle Francis Roberts’ house ; nearly the whole of the village of Torksey was inundated.

“ Mr. Thomas Withers, of Harby, Notts, is ninety-one years of age ; says he remembers the flood of Spaldford Bank in 1795. The water came up to the lane as far as William Higgett’s house on the Wigsley Road, also that it rose up to the second pane of glass in the window of a house now occupied by Clipstone in Thorney Plots, and that it came into a house now occupied by James Robinson, in Harby, level with the oven floor.

“ As the repair and keeping up of the Bank for the future will now be placed under the surveillance of Her Majesty’s Commissioners of Sewers, the probability is that such an inundation as that which took place in 1795, will never occur again. I am, therefore, most anxious that some record of that event should be handed down to posterity and this has induced me to draw out this account. This district came under my notice in the years 1819 and 1820, when I was engaged in the Survey for the Ordnance Map of this and the adjoining Counties ; at that time the breaking of Spaldford Bank was the subject of general conversation ; as an event of great importance, the matter made considerable impression upon my mind. I have been acquainted with the district ever since that time, and in going over it on the present occasion, I was much astonished and grieved to find how few people, comparatively speaking, are now living who saw the flood in 1795*—in a very few years there will not be one left ; then the Bank breaking would be only a matter of tradition, without any reliable memorial,—hence I have written this.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your faithful and obliged servant,

“ J. S. PADLEY.

“ New Road, Lincoln, Sept. 10th, 1858.”

The second opening is a smaller one, about three hundred yards in length, called the DOG BANK, situate in the parish of Newton. A portion of this bank is from eight to ten feet high, the remainder somewhat lower.

The third dangerous opening is on both sides the entrance of the Foss Dyke into the Trent at Torksey Lock : that on the south side is one hundred and twenty yards, and that on the north two hundred yards in length ; these Banks gave way November 2nd, 1770, and flooded all the lands on both sides the Foss Dyke to Lincoln. An account of this flood

* Of all the Witnesses herein mentioned in connection with the Flood of 1795, not one is living at this date (1881).

is here given, for which the author is mainly indebted to documents preserved by the late Mr. Pilley, of Torksey Lock, collected some time after 1795.

On the 2nd November, 1770, the dam of the High Bridge in the city of Lincoln was taken up and the water let down, the volume of which was greatly increased by the heavy and almost incessant rains which had been falling for many days past; as continual rain fell afterwards, the water rose gradually from two feet three inches at Thorn Bridge (at which mark it stood on the 5th November,) at the rate of three inches in twelve hours, until Thursday, the 10th, in the morning, when it reached to four feet nine inches; at this time the banks of the Trent gave way on both sides of Torksey Bridge, and fell into the level on this (Lincoln) side by two breaches. The Trent water was six inches higher than the Torksey Bridge doors, and had four feet six inches fall of water into this level; from this time to Thursday, the 20th of November, in the morning, when the water was at the highest, it rose at the Thorn Bridge from eight inches above the cross or flood-mark, to the spring of the arch seven feet above the bottom—that is, two feet three inches in five days; but it was three feet higher at Brayford than at the lower side of Thorn Bridge, occasioned by the obstruction offered by the two bridges (High Bridge and Thorn Bridge*.) The force and noise with which the water ran can scarcely be conceived, and all kinds of business on the water was stopped for many days.

A consequence of the two breaches before-mentioned was the flooding of the villages of Saxelby, Torksey, Brampton, Fenton, Kettlethorpe, Thorney, Skellingthorpe, Boultham, and many others: great quantities of hay and corn in stack were destroyed, and many entire stacks of hay were to be seen floating between Skellingthorpe and Boultham, in great danger of being driven by the stream into the channels which crossed the city of Lincoln; had they choked those channels the consequences would have been most serious to the inhabitants of the lower part of the city, but by the commendable care of Mr. John Wilson (the Mayor) they were secured by ropes, &c., so as to prevent them from moving until the water had fallen. It was very fortunate that the wind was not high during the flood, otherwise the lower part of Lincoln must have been laid entirely under water.

These banks have undoubtedly been broken, and again and again repaired in mediæval

* Thorn Bridge, which was a stone structure forming a communication between the northern and southern parts of the city, stood at the end of the present street called Thorngate; this Bridge fell down in 1796, in the night, and was replaced by the late Swing Bridge, erected in the Magpies' Square, on the site of the present Melville Bridge, erected in 1858.

times. But until recently they were in a very bad state, and caused considerable anxiety, especially during the flood of the winter of 1877, as was evidenced by numerous meetings, letters in the newspapers, &c.

These banks being several miles lower down the Trent than the Spaldford Bank, the breach in them did not affect so large a tract as the memorable one of 1795 before-mentioned ; still its effects were severely felt as far as Lincoln.

It will be noticed that the water was dammed up on the west side of Lincoln, by reason of the High Street standing ten feet higher than the present average level of water in the Foss Dyke.

On the construction of Sewerage Works at Lincoln, about 1879, the raising of the High Street was found to be thirteen feet upon a layer of sand twenty feet deep. Undoubtedly the ground on which the street stands was originally on the same level as the land on both sides, viz. : Boultham on the west and Carwick on the east ; most probably this was first raised by those great road-makers—the Romans,—in fact, on digging out the foundations of a house at the corner of Alfred Street in St. Peter-at-Gowts' Parish, a few years ago, a stone yard, full of slabs and great stones, up to five feet in height, evidently intended for this purpose, was discovered.*

The fourth opening is on the north side of Torksey Church, called the "STANGS BANK," which was in a very dilapidated state, and in great danger of breaking, causing much anxiety, and notwithstanding constant watching, laggotting and cradging, during the flood of January, 1877, a considerable quantity of water still oozed through the foundations ; this bank was thoroughly repaired in 1879. It is three hundred yards in length.

The fifth opening is in the township of Brampton, and is called "BREACH PIT BANK ;" it extends for nearly a mile in a crescent form, with the bow towards the east. There is evidence that it has broken five times previous to the year 1730, and several times since ; the last breach having occurred in October, 1824, when a large hole was made in the turn-pike road, and a servant of Mr. Fullard, of Marton, who attempted to ford the water with a horse and cart, was drowned. A few years ago, a new bank was formed, under the author's direction, about half-a-mile nearer the Trent, which may be said to resemble the string to

* An ornamental stone found amongst these was sold for £10, by the late Mr. Durance, to the authorities of Kensington Museum.

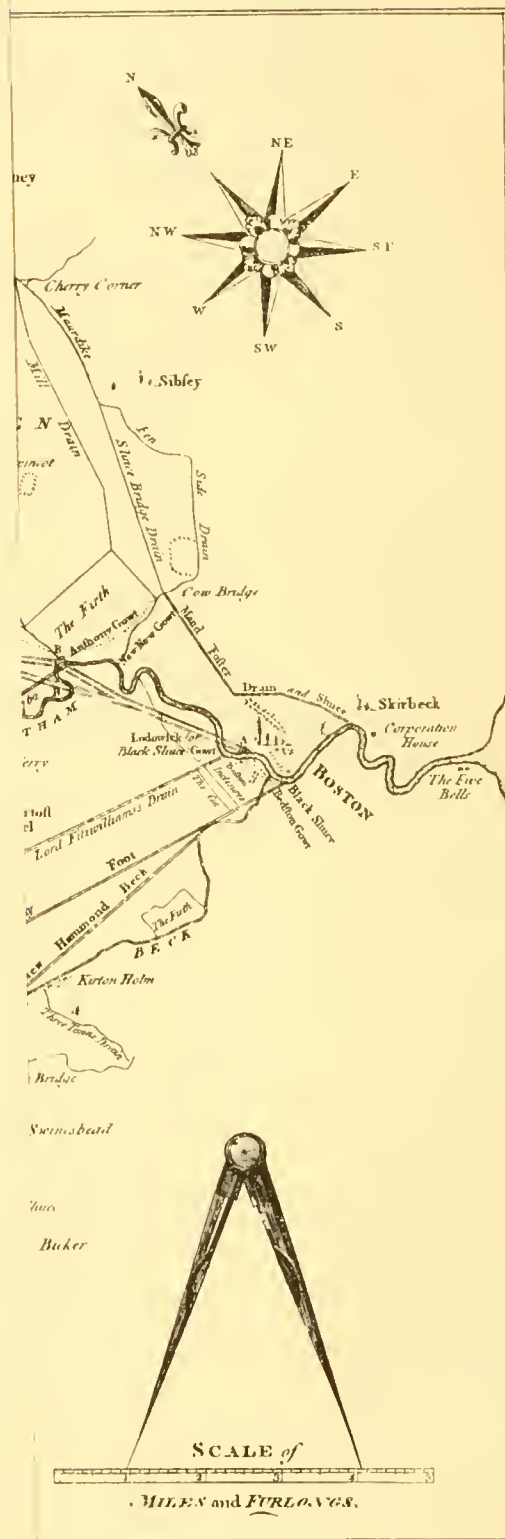
the bow of the old bank. This bank is twelve feet high, and twenty-two yards broad at the base, and withstood the flood of January, 1877, remarkably well.†

As before stated, previously to the construction of these banks on the sides of the Trent, its waters had free access down to Lincoln through the five openings, and then having received the floods of the Till and the Witham, had to pass through the narrow valley at Lincoln, thus raising the water to a great height; this is borne out by the fact that a boat chained to a stake was found in digging a foundation or well, at the junctions of the modern West Parade, Orchard Street, Victoria Street, and Motherby Lane, in the City of Lincoln, at the distance of three hundred and forty yards from Brayford: this indicates that the floods at that time must have been very high indeed, and, after having passed through the valley of Lincoln, have flowed down into the Fens, joined by the Langworth River, the Tile House Beck, the River Bain, and other streams from the Cliffs on the west, and smaller streams round the north edge of the Fens, covering all the low land down to the Wash, leaving Swineshead, Bicker, Wigtoft, Boston, Skirbeck, Sibsey, Stiekford, and all the Holland towns (or “Tofts” as they are called by Dugdale,) mere islands in the water, especially when joined by the water from Cambridgeshire, &c. The whole tract of country was continually subject to this until stopped by the banks in question, and if they were taken away, as before stated, the floods would cover the district to a large extent.

THE RIVER WITHAM.

Having given a description and a historical account of the flooded country between the River Trent and Lincoln, we now commence with the River Witham, which rises in the parish of South Witham and runs in a northerly direction, passing through Grantham down to Lincoln, in length about twenty-six miles; being joined by the Brant, it brings down very large quantities of water to Lincoln. Formerly the channel branched off from the present course in the parish of St. Botolph, and passed westward from the city into the parish of Boultham, where it was joined by the Till, at a point about half-a-mile or more west of the present High Bridge, and there is evidence that the force of the stream flowed over the valley to the foot of North Hill in Lincoln. The river then turned in an easterly direction, nearly at right angles to its former course, and joining the flood-water from the

† All these banks have been thoroughly repaired under the direction of the Courts of Sewers at Lincoln and Newark, since this account was commenced.



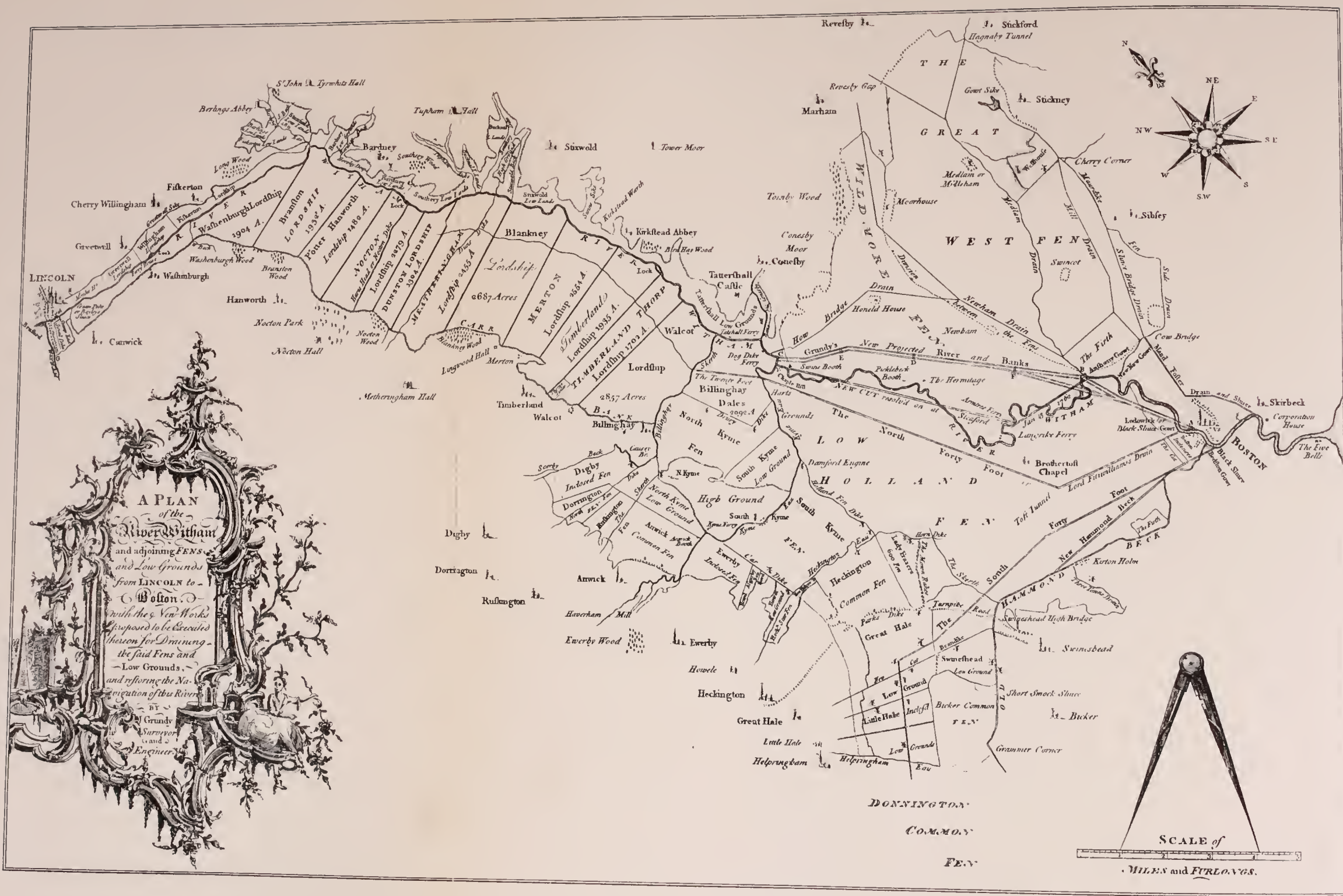
Trent as before described, would probably pass the place where the boat was discovered at the foot of Motherby Hill, and then found its way along the north side of the Lincoln valley by the foot of the high lands of the Monks, Greetwell, Fiskerton, to the high lands of Short Ferry, where it met with a promontory of high land; it then worked its way round that point to the junction of the Barlings Ean, still keeping to an eastward direction, till it was met by a stream called the Tile House Beck, which, together with the effect of the high land adjoining, turned it into a curl, or rather an elbow, and then emerging, would skirt the high lands of Bardney, Southrey, Stixwold, Kirkstead, Tattershall, to Chapel Hill, flowing in a very crooked course from the Tile House Beck elbow to Chapel Hill, and still more deviously from Chapel Hill to Boston, from whence it reached the sea through the Outlet.

By the course the River Witham took then, as now, a tract of fen, about two-and-a-half miles in width on the average, is left on the west side, between the river and the Carr Dyke, down to Billingham Skirt, at which point the great Open Fens commence.

THE CARR DYKE

Is a very ancient navigation work of the Romans; it commenced at Torksey Lock on the River Trent, and took the line of the present Foss Dyke navigation to the boundary between the parishes of Skellingthorpe and Boultham, and so by a curve through part of Boultham lordship south-east, and joined the River Witham at a point two hundred and twenty yards north of the present Bargate Weir, it then took a direction eastward, and ran about sixty-six yards to the south of St. Botolph's Church, and across to the ancient boundary of the Banks Closes, between those Closes and the Lincoln South Common (now converted into gardens to the range of houses built upon the skirt of the Common, and called the South Park); it continued eastward through what was part of the South Common, then skirting the high land of Canwick and Washingborough lordships, along the foot of the high land of Washingborough and Heighington; along the edge of the Cliff Row of country to Billingham, and near the villages of Great Hale, Horbling and Billingham, continuing to the Welland River at West Deeping; as corroborative proof that this was a Roman work, the author would mention that at the Inclosure of Washingborough and Heighington, part of the Carr Dyke was cleaned out, and in so doing a pair of large Roman vases were found, and indeed Roman remains have been found along the line throughout.*

* "In cleansing the Dyke [the Foss Dyke in the line of the Carr Dyke] between Torksey and Lincoln, some time prior to the year 1774, a small bronze figure of Mars was found, and is in the possession of Mr.



In this Dyke the water was carried on a level or thereabouts, and apparently without locks, so, in order to cross the different valleys, the water was turned up until it attained the level of the water coming down, and then returned on the other side, keeping its regular level course. This was repeated wherever needful throughout the whole distance, and it is particularly shewn at the present day, in the parishes of Metheringham, Martin and Timberland.

At the time of its construction this was a very fine and judicious scheme of navigation, being, as before stated, without locks, and having plenty of “feeders” to keep up the water, viz.: the Rivers Till, Witham, and the Welland, also some fine springs from the high country along its course, particularly those at Bourne and Horbling; it eventually crossed the River Glen, and fell into the River Welland at West Deeping.

INCLOSURE OF FRONTAGES IN CERTAIN PARISHES.

At some early period, the parishes of Billingham, Walcot, Timberland-Thorpe, Timberland, Martin, and Blankney, appear to have inclosed and attempted the cultivation of their Frontage Fens, by Wind Engines, but at that time the River Witham being crooked and in a very bad state, without banks, these frontagers were obliged to leave a washway of half-a-mile wide on the west side of the river, so as not to impede the drainage of the country; how far they succeeded in the cultivation of the same we have now no means of learning, but after the river was improved and embanked, we find that part of the Fen which was then between the New Embankment was called “the Dales,” and some time after (viz.,

Ellison, of Thorney, in Yorkshire; it was shown by Mr. Stuart to the Society of Antiquaries in 1774. The inscription on the face side was read by Mr. Bowyer.—

‘Deo Marti et
Numinibus Augustis cohortis
Asyri Bruce-
ius & Carasius de
sus donarunt or donaverunt.

[REVERSE SIDE.]
Ad sestertia c.
celatus arar-
ius fecit et Alfra-
menti liberto dona-
vit factum III.’”

(See *Marrat*, page 18, vol. I.) Marrat also mentions a tradition that the Carr Dyke extended on to Cambridge, but the author has not had an opportunity of investigating the evidences on this point.

in the year 1787), an Act of Parliament was obtained for Inclosing it; subsequent to the Improvement of the river, a further Inclosure was made by means of an Embankment of the Frontages of Metheringham, Dunston, Nocton, Potterhanworth, and Branston, but nearer the river, then probably improved in part; at the north end of the Embankment, a Drain (now known as “Branston Delph”) was carried up between the parishes of Branston and Heighington to the Fen-side, leaving Heighington and Washingborough parishes in the open; these Inclosures were all drained by Wind Engines (of one of which we have an account by Mr. Young; it belonged to Mr. Chaplin, and had cost One thousand pounds;) until superseded by the Steam Engines by which they are at present (1881) drained. (See Plan of Inclosures.) It appears that the lands were only very inefficiently drained by those Wind Engines, which were included in the Rate for Draining and Improvement of the Fens in the Act of 1762.

The grand outlet for all these waters was through the opening between Sibsey and Stickney, about the centre of which now stands North Dyke Bridge.* This must have been a most formidable pass up to the time when the turnpike road was made. The names of the villages in the neighbourhood indicate that they were near to water at the time of nomenclature, namely—Skirbeck, Sibsey, Stickney, and Stickford.

Formerly the Fens down from Lincoln to Boston were flooded nearly throughout the whole year; and, indeed, after they were parochialized down to Billingham Skirt, that part belonging to Blankney, containing Two thousand five hundred acres, was let by auction at Horncastle at the rent of *Ten pounds* per annum.

In the year 1733 the River Witham had become a mere brook, without banks, and at many places was certainly not more than eighteen or twenty feet wide. This is stated by Mr. John Pitchford, and is mentioned at length in Mr. James Scribo's Report on the state of the River at that date, a copy of which is here subjoined.—

COPY OF SCRIBO'S REPORT (1733).

“The Present bad state of the River Witham between the City of Lincoln and the Corpora-

* In digging out the foundations for this bridge, when it was rebuilt under the author's superintendence, the head of a cross was found containing a figure of the Saviour, which was afterwards removed to the Temple Gardens, Lincoln; probably the original bridge at this place was built by an Abbot of Revesby, as there is a farm adjoining it, called “Wydale,” formerly belonging to Revesby Abbey, the rent of which was appropriated to its repair.

tion of Boston, Humbly represented to the Consideration of the Mayor and Aldermen of the said City, and to the Gentlemen of the adjacent Towns, with Proposals for Restoring and Preserving the Navigation, and for the more Effectual drainage of the Fens, Commons, and Low Marshes : by JAMES SCRIBO.

“ It is found by Experience, that the nearer any Port lyes to the deep Seas, the more Spacious and Commodious is their Havens, whilst others that are situate on the flat Shores and foul Seas, never have any good Channel unless they be supply'd by large Rivers which frequently bring floods from the Uplands and Hilly Countries that run with Strong Currents and Rapid Streams to Scoure away the Sand or Silt that the Sea is continually throwing up, and the Stronger the Current runs the deeper and more Spacious are the Havens or Channels which, when a long Succession of dry Seasons happen lessen the usual quantity of back water or high land floods as aforesaid, and the Current runs weak and Easy, not having sufficient strength and force to scour away the Sand the Sea casts up, the Channels grow Narrow and Shallow and Obstruct Navigation until a return of wet Seasons, which quicken and Strengthen these Currents again, and So grind and Scoure and carry away the Sands, and restore the Channels to their usual and former depth again ; Now when these Streams are diverted another way or not confined to one certain Channel, but have liberty to Expand or Spread themselves into Low and Flat Countries, it frequently ends in the Intire loss of Navigation, and the ruin of good Ports and large Cities ; Reducing Sea Ports into Inland Towns and well-built Cities into heaps of old ruins : Cyrus took Babylon by dividing the Euphrates into forty-nine Channels, and by this means made the River Fordable into the City.

“ Something like these as I take is now the case of the River Witham, for it appears to me upon Examining an Exact Survey of the said River, Between Lincoln and Boston, taken by Mr. John Pitchford, that from Lodowick Gowt or Black Sluice to Tattershall Bane, the Haven or River for above Twenty Miles runs very crooked and winding, and in Severall places is not above eighteen or twenty feet in breadth and very Shallow, and that there are several large Rivers and Brooks which bring down the waters from the Springs and Uplands and Hilly Countries, which in wet Seasons Run with strong Currents all discharging their water into the River Witham above Chappel Hill (to wit) Kime Eau, Tattershall Bane, Billingham Skirts, Duns Dyke, Tupham Dike, Hares Head, Bardney Beek, Creampoke Sluice, and Lincoln River, five of which are any of them larger than the aforesaid winding

Haven, so that after the great downfall of Rains and Snows, which frequently happen in the Winter Season, occasion great quantities of water that are brought down these Rivers into the River Witham which should serve to scour and cleanse out the Haven. The River below Chappel Hill not being of Sufficient breadth and depth to carry down these floods to Sea, generally overflow the Banks and lay severall Thousand Acres of rich pasture lands under water, and that sometimes above three feet deep, to the great prejudice of the Land owners, as well as Navigation, which waters Stagnate and remain upon the Lands for three or four months or the chiefest part of the Summer Season till partly Exhaled by the Sun, and the other part carry'd down to Sea by way of Lodowick Goat, which Sluice was purposely Erected for the draining the Fen Low Lands, so that little or none of the Highland floods ever pass to Sea through the aforesaid shallow winding Haven, to the great decay and almost Intire ruin of the Navigation to the City of Lincoln, for at present and several years past the Navigation between Boston and the City of Lincoln has been so very bad that only boats and Vessels of very small burthen could pass from the one place to the other, to the great prejudice of Trade to the said City, as well as the great loss of the product of so many Thousand Acres of rich Fen Land which might have produced great quantities of Corn and fattened great numbers of Cattle for the benefit of the City aforesaid and Towns adjacent ; To Remedy which Inconvenience severall Noblemen and Gentlemen have Endeavoured at great Expenses in cutting drains, Erecting Engines and Embanking their seperate Estates, but without any Success, So that It is humbly conceived that unless some new and better method be taken for Restoring Navigation by confining the Highland floods within the River Witham, and a free passage made for conveying them to Sea in one proper channell through Boston Haven, which must of Course keep the Adjacent Fen Lands dry, It will not be many more Years before the Navigation will be Intirely lost, and draining be thereby rendered Impracticable : To remedy these Inconveniences it is humbly Conceived that the most proper Method (that can be taken) is to make good strong Sea Dike Banks against the River Witham, at a convenient distance from Tattershall Bane up to the City of Lincoln, and then cut a new Channell or Haven Seventy feet in breadth at the Top, Fifty feet at the Bottom and Six feet deep, in a direct line through Holland Fen from Tattershall Ferry down to a little below Lodowick Gowt at Boston, which contains Eleven Miles and Two Furlongs in length, and by this means cut off all the Turnings and windings of the old River, which as it now runs, is more than Twenty Miles ; or otherwise cut a New Cannal or Haven Seventy feet in breadth at the Top, Fifty feet at the Bottom and Six feet deep through Wildmore

Fen in a direct line from Tattershall Bane to a little above Anthony's Goat, which contains in length Seven Miles, Three Furlongs, and as the River now runs, is above Sixteen Miles (see Mr. Pitchford's Plan of the River.) If Either of the New Cannals were made it is apprehended it would be sufficient to convey down to Sea all the floods and waters which descend down from the Uplands and Hilly Countries in wet Seasons into the River Witham and prevent them from overflowing the banks and drowning the Fens as they now do, for by shortening the River about Ten Miles would add to the Velocity and fall of the Water, Between the City of Lincoln and Corporation of Boston, which upon a carefull Examination in the year 1733, I found to be sixteen feet fall from the said City to Boston Bridge, And by adding Fifty feet more to the breadth of the River it is Humbly conceived may carry off the Water much sooner and Tides will flow higher and further up the River towards the said City of Lincoln: and by confining these Highland Floods to one certain Channell, they will run off with greater force and Eagerness, that will deepen, Sconre and cleanse all the Lands out of Boston Haven, So that small Vessells may be brought up to Town at Neap Tides, and all the Lowlands between Boston and Dunsdike will be cleans'd by way of Lodowick Goat, Yet as a General and Publick good ought always to be preferr'd before a private Intrest, I cannot help being of opinion that to cut a new Cannal through Wildmore Fen is the most Generous and best Scheme; For it is apprehended if the new Haven be carried down as low as Lodowick Goat at Boston, it will answer the end in making good the Navigation to Lincoln and drain all the Low Fen Lands on the West Side of the River, but the Quere will be whether the North Goats and Anthony's Goat will be Silted up by not receiving any benefit from the upland floods in that part of the Channel to carry off the Sands the Sea casts up: In Order to prevent the Inconveniencys of fresh waters running off too fast in dry Seasons, and the Salt water flowing too high up the River, it is proposed to fix three Locks upon the River; The first between the City of Lincoln and Creampoke Sluice, to keep up a head of fresh water for the use and benefit of the City, with a Navigable or Pen Sluice and Low Wears or Stanches to run off the wast water, So that the low Lands above the City may not receive any damage by holding up the waters too high: To deepen and make wide all the Narrow shallow Places of the Old River between this Lock and Hare Booth where the Second Lock is to be placed, So that Laden Vessels may pass and repass when the water in this part of the River is one foot under the Soill of the Low Lands: At this Lock it is proposed to have eight draw doors, to be taken up at the time of high floods and kept down in dry seasons: Also a Navigable or Pen Sluice with Low Wears and Stanches as

the former, to run off all the Overplus Water : The Third is a Sluice to be fixed upon the new Projected Cannal in Wildmore Fen, with Strong Sea Gates to Stem the Salt water from flowing up the River in dry Seasons. Also to place Fen draw doors the whole breadth of the River, to be taken up and Shut down as need requires in time of high floods or dry Seasons ; And for the better draining the Low Fen Lands from Dunsdike to Sandhills in Washingborough Lordship, it is thought convenient that there should be a Small drain cut thro' the Low Lands to fall into the River Witham below the Second Lock at Hare Booth, and make good the Carr bank as is proposed in former Scheme ; And it is Humbly conceived that if the above Schemes be put in practice will restore and always preserve a good Navigation up to the City of Lincolne and Effectually drain all the Fens and Low Lands on both sides the River. And that no Gentlemen or Land owners that have any right of Commons in Wildmore or Holland Fens will have any reason to complain by Suffering any Damage by the aforesaid Projected new Cutt, For the Sands from the Mouth of the Sluices and Goats would be carried off and the Haven so deep that their Commons and Low Fens will be will be drain'd in wet Seasons, and always be Supplied with fresh water above the Lock for the use and benefit of the Commons.

An ESTIMATE of the Expence in Cutting the New proposed Cannall from Tattershall Ferry to Lodowick at Boston, Thro' Holland Fen, in length 11 miles and 2 furlongs, which is proposed to be 70 feet wide at the top, 50 feet at bottom, and 6 feet deep; the banks 8 feet high, the Seats 50 feet wide, and the Fore Sands 110 feet on Each side (viz):

Floors in one Mile.	Value per Furlong	Total Amount.	Incidental Ex- pences, as Over- seers, Planks, Barrows, &c., per Mile.	Total charges per Mile.	Total Expences of 11 Miles and 2 Furlongs.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
4752	3	712 16 0	150 0 0	862 16 0	9706 10 0
4752	3	712 16 0	150 0 0	862 16 0	6363 3 0

In every Mile there are 264 Poles of
20 feet long (Equal to 320 Statute Poles.)
Every Pole in length according to the above
demensions contains 18 Floors, of 400 Cube
feet in a Floor

The Other propos'd Cut from Tatter-
shall Bane to Anthony's Goat, thro' Wild-
more Fen, contains 7 Miles and 3 Furlongs
in length, and all other Demensions as
above

The recommendation of Mr. Scribo as relating to the Canal through Holland Fen had its outcome in the system of drainage commencing with the Twenty-foot Drain at Billingham Skirt to the Kyme Eau, and from thence in a straight line by the North Forty Foot Drain to Toft Tunnel, near Brothertoft Chapel, and carried to Ludovic's or Black Sluice Gowt by means of Lord Fitzwilliam's Drain. These works were completed, and appear in the plan and report drawn up and presented by Mr. Grundy in 1754, a copy of which rare and interesting document we here insert.

COPY OF GRUNDY'S REPORT (1753).

“At a Meeting held at Boston, in the County of Lincoln, October the 19th, 1753 :

“Present,

The Right Honourable Lord Vere Bertie, the Right Honourable John Lord Monson, Sir Francis Whichcote, Bart., Robert Viner, Thomas Whichcot, John Mitchell, Charles Reynolds, John Chaplin, Charles Wood, Richard Hardwick, Richard Fydell (Mayor of Boston), and Lawrence Monck, Esquires ; The Rev. Charles Beridge, LL.D., John Shaw, Richard Falkner, and Robert Hewett, Clerks ; John Heaford (on Behalf of Lord Fortescue), Henry Brown (on Behalf of Abraham Hunne, Esq.) and John Dobbs, Gent.

“The Three following Proposals, which were formerly made, for a general Drainage of the Waters between Lincoln and the said Town of Boston, being then taken under Consideration (viz.): The First, by a new Cut through Wildmore Fen ; The Second, by enlarging of Lodowick, or Lord Fitzwilliam's Drain ; And the Third, by improving the old River, cutting off many of the Curves thereof, and by making the Channel wider and deeper.

“It was the unanimous Opinion of the above-named Lords and Gentlemen, and many others, at the said Meeting, That, in Regard to the Difficulties and Objections which have been made against the two former Schemes, the Third and last is the most eligible to proceed upon.

“Order'd,

“That a Meeting be held at the White-Hart, in Lincoln, on Thursday, the 15th Day of November next, in order to consider of proper Heads for a Bill to be brought into Parliament the ensuing Sessions, to carry the said Scheme into Execution ; at which Time and

Place, all Persons interested, or who have any Objections to make to the said Proposal, or any Thing further to propose, are desired to attend.

“ In consequence of which Appointment,

“ A Meeting was held at the White-Hart in the Bail of Lincoln, which lasted the 15th, 16th and 17th Days of November, 1753, to consider of the State of the River Witham, the Drainage through the same, and how to restore its antient Navigation from the City of Lincoln through the Town of Boston to the sea.

“ Present.

“ The Right Honourable Lord Vere Bertie, The Right Honourable John Lord Monson, Sir John Tyrwhitt, Bart., Sir Francis Dashwood, Bart. (by Lord Vere Bertie), Sir Francis Whicheote, Bart. (by Thomas Whicheot, Esq.), Robert Viner, Thomas Whicheot, Charles Amcotts, Coningsby Sibthorpe, Charles Reynolds, John Chaplin, Charles Wood, Robert Cracroft, John King, John Disney, Richard Fydell (Mayor of Boston), Lawrence Monek, and David Atkinson, Esquires ; The Mayor of Lincoln ; John Shaw, Robert Hewett, Samuel Lodington, and Richard Wright, Clerks ; Thomas Beck and John Haw, Gent. ; Mr. Williamson (on the Behalf of the Rt. Hon. Earl Fitzwilliams), John Heaford (on the Behalf of the Rt. Hon. Lord Fortescue), Mr. Stevenson (on the Behalf of William Banks, Esq.), and Mr. Brown (on the Behalf of Abraham Hume, Esq.) ;

“ The above-named Lords and Gentlemen having taken into their mature Consideration, the many real Advantages that must accrue to every Proprietor by such a Drainage, to the People who live in that level, by rendering the Fens more wholesome and habitable, and to the whole County of Lincoln in general, by means of a convenient Navigation, as well as how to obviate all the foreseen Difficulties that might otherwise have impeded the Prosecution of so rational a Scheme, came to the following Resolutions.

“ That a New Drainage from Lincoln to the Haven at Boston is necessary.

“ That an Application shall be made to Parliament, to empower Commissioners to levy a certain Tax from the Proprietors of all the Fens and Low-grounds, between the City of Lincoln and Town of Boston (according to the Proportions hereafter mentioned), in order to

employ the same in draining, and preserving the Drainage of the said Fens and Low-grounds, between Lincoln and Boston, and to improve the Navigation of the River Witham, so far forth as is consistent with the said Drainage.

“That it is their Opinion, that every Lord of a Manor, whose Demesne-Lands, or Commons, are chargeable to the said Drainage (by himself or proper Agent) every Proprietor, having a Freehold Estate rated at Fifty Pounds per annum, which is also chargeable towards the said Drainage; the Mayors of Lincoln and Boston, or their Deputies appointed by the Corporations; one Deputy for each of the eleven Towns, having Right of Commoning on the Holland Fen; and (to preserve a due Proportion) six Deputies for the Towns having Right of Commoning on Wildmore-Fen; and eight Deputies for the Towns having Right of Commoning in the West Fen; one Deputy for Heckington-Fen; one Deputy for Billingham-Fen; one Deputy for Walcot, and one Deputy for North Kyme; shall be Commissioners authorized to put the said Act into Execution.

“That the Deputies shall be chosen at Meetings to be held for that Purpose, yearly, and the Returns shall be made at the annual Meeting of the Commissioners, signed by the Chief-Constables of those Hundreds, wherein such Fens respectively shall lie: That every Commissioner, at any Meeting, shall bear his own Expences and not be maintained at the Charge of the Level.

“That the Commissioners shall be vested with proper Powers, and directed to chuse a Committee annually among themselves, not exceeding in Number twenty-one (seven of whom shall constitute a Court) which (after a Plan for the general Drainage is approved of by the Commissioners) shall be vested with all the Powers granted to the Commissioners by the said Act, for carrying the said Plan into Execution: Which said Committee shall have Power to specifie the Number of Acres of all such Lands as are chargeable to the said Drainage; and shall give Notice, by a Writing affixed to the Church-door, of all Lands so charged in every Parish; and also at the Church-door of each respective Parish, having Right of Common on each Fen, the Number of Acres charged on the said Fen; and if any Person thinks himself aggrieved by such Charge, and cannot upon Application settle it with the Committee, he shall have Power, and on Request be obliged, to issued Notice to the Sherriff to summons a Jury, not interested in the Premises, or concerned in Lands to be drained by this Act, who shall, having with them a Surveyor, deliver in Writing, to the said Committee, on a Day

fixt, their Determination of the Dispute, according to the best of their Judgment, and such Determination to be final.

“ All Persons demanding such a Jury shall deliver a Writing, signed by themselves or Agent, containing the full number of Acres they claim to have discharged ; and the Chairman of the Committee shall also sign to the full Number of Acres, which the Committee, on their Part, insist upon to have charged ; and the Expence of the said Jury shall be paid by the Committee, out of Monies to be raised by the said Act, or by the Person appealing, in Proportion as the Verdict of the Jury shall more or less determine against either Side. And that the said Committee, or the major Part of them, at any Court, by Warrant under their Hands and Seals, being not less than Seven in Number, shall have Power to levy upon the Lands and Tenements, Goods or Chattels, of such as refuse to pay, and also, in like Manner, to levy for the Charges of a Jury.

“ That a Tax be laid, of one Shilling, for every Acre of Private Property, to be benefitted by the said Drainage : And for every Acre of Half-year's Land, Eight-pence : And for every Acre of Common, Four-pence : To be paid yearly, until the whole Expence for the said Drainage be discharged. The Levy to be made by a Dike-Reeve's-Assessment, in the several Parishes where such Assessments have been usual ; and, where Dike-Reeve's-Assessments have not been usual, then by such Methods as Money has been usually raised for defraying the Expences of Draining and doing the Works of Sewers, carried on in the Fens ; or, for the greater Ease of the Commoners, they may be impowered to inclose (with the Consent of the Lord of the Manor) any Part of the said Commons, towards raising the Sums necessary to be furnished by the said Tax, provided that such Inclosure be not made within the Liberties of Wildmore-Fen, or West-Fen.

“ That the Grand-Sluice, to be erected for Stemming the Tide, with the Lock for Navigation, be placed between Lodowick's-Gote and Anthony's-Gote, but as near to Lodowick's-Gote as may be ; and to be the first Work proceeded upon.

“ That, after the Grand-Sluice is erected and finish'd, the Commissioners shall order and direct the Drainage, from Anthony's-Gote to the Town of Boston, to be ditched out and sufficiently finished in the first Place, so that the Commons, called Wildmore-Fen and West-Fen, shall be effectually drained through the said Gote as soon as may be, and by the Drains leading thereto, which are to be made at the Costs and Charges of the said Com-

moners. And if it shall afterwards appear that the said Fens cannot be sufficiently and effectually drained, by Means of the said Gote, and Drains leading thereto, That the Commissioners, acting under the said Act, shall, and are directed, immediately, on such Failure of Drainage, by and through Anthony's-Gote, to make a new Drain, or Drains, through and from the said Commons, towards Maud-Foster's-Gote, to the End that the said Fens may be sufficiently and perfectly drained. And that such Works as shall be necessary for such Drainage through Maud-Foster's-Gote, or enlarging the said Gote, or Drains, now leading thereto, shall be made at the Charge of the said Commoners.

“ That, after the said Grand-Sluice is finish'd, the Work of the River shall be proceeded upon, from the said Grand-Sluice, gradually upwards, and no other Ways, till the Whole is compleated. And that the Rivers, which run into the New-Cut, shall be diked, and banked, affoon as the said Cut shall be compleated past the said Rivers.

“ The Names of the respective Lands to be charged on both sides of the River Witham : And also, of the several Parishes wherein all the Low-Lands are intended to be charged : With the best Computation that can be obtained, at present, of the Number of Acres. (viz.)

<i>South Side River Witham.</i>						<i>North Side River Witham.</i>					
					ACRES						ACRES
Lincoln	-	-	-	-	175	Monks	-	-	-	-	93
Lincoln Common			-	-	49	Greetwell	-	-	-	-	217
Canwick	-	-	-	-	360	Willingham	-	-	-	-	243
Washinburgh	-	-	-	-	1904	Fiskerton	-	-	-	-	697
Branston	-	-	-	-	1932	Barlings	-	-	-	-	156
Potter-Hanworth			-	-	1482	Stainfield	-	-	-	-	480
Nocton	-	-	-	-	2279	Bardney	-	-	-	-	585
Dunston	-	-	-	-	1304	Southrey	-	-	-	-	347
Metheringham			-	-	2445	Tupholme	-	-	-	-	74
Blankney	-	-	-	-	2687	Bucknall	-	-	-	-	445
Marton	-	-	-	-	2554	Horsington	-	-	-	-	321
Timberland	-		-	-	1935	Stixwold	-	-	-	-	515
Timberland-Thorpe			-	-	4559	Swinsike	-	-	-	-	208
Walcot	-	-	-	-		Woodhall	-	-	-	-	20
Billinghay	-		-	-		Thornton	-	-	-	-	7

<i>South Side River Witham.</i>					<i>North Side River Witham.</i>				
				ACRES					ACRES
Billinghay-Dales, and Dog-Dike				2092	Kirkstead	-	-	-	189
North-Kyme-Pen	-	-	-	1800	Tattershall	-	-	-	880
South-Kyme-Pen	-	-	-	1650	Coningsby	-	-	-	168
Hart's Ground	-	-	-	480	Marcham	-	-	-	100
Great-Beets	-	-	-	60	Hundle-House	-	-	-	80
Little-Beets	-	-	-	34	Revesby	-	-	-	200
Rakes	-	-	-	60	Meddleham	-	-	-	100
Heckington-Pen	-	-	-	1500	Moorhouse	-	-	-	100
Mr. Paine's 600	-	-	-	600	Meer-Booth	-	-	-	60
Elwerby	-	-	-	1200	Hermitage	-	-	-	5
Howell and Asgarby	-	-	-	450	Newholm	-	-	-	40
Great-Hale	-	-	-	1950	Westhouse	-	-	-	160
Little-Hale	-	-	-	1860	Widall	-	-	-	
Brothertolft	-	-	-	50	Langrike	-	-	-	300
Anwick	-	-	-	1500	Frith-Bank	-	-	-	250
Ruskington	-	-	-		East-Kirkby	-	-	-	
Donington	-	-	-		Langworth	-	-	-	
Digby	-	-	-		Swinecole	-	-	-	
Holland-Pen	-	-	-	22200	Stickford	-	-	-	
					Hugnaby	-	-	-	
					Stickney	-	-	-	240
					Wildmore-Pen	-	-	-	12000
					West-Pen	-	-	-	16000

“ That a New-Cut shall be made according to a Plan signed, and deliver'd, by Mr. Grundy, to the Gentlemen at this Meeting (which see at the End of these Resolutions.)

“ That from the Time the new Works, for the said Drainage, shall be begun, until the same shall be completed, Lodowick's-Gate, for the Safety of the Country, ought to be supported, and maintained, at the Public Expence.

“ That the Sunken-Tunnels, under Kyme-Eau and Billinghay-Skirts, which by Experience have been found to be very detrimental to the River Witham, shall be taken up, to prevent any more Water being diverted from the main Channel by them for the Future.

“That the Channel of Kyme-Eau, from Dampford-Sluice to the intended River, and the Channel of Billingham-Skirts, from North-Kyme-Bridge to the Witham, shall be sufficiently deepened, and banked, and the said Banks, and Rivers, to be kept in Repairs at the general Expence.

“That the several Rivers, of Tattershall, Bane, and Barling's-Eau, on the North-Side, and of Dunsdike, Harehead, and Washinburgh-Beck, on the South-Side of the River Witham, shall, in like Manner, be deepened, banked, and kept in Repair, so far as shall be thought necessary to answer the Purposes of a general Drainage.

“That the Tunnels, lying through the Banks on the South-Side of Kyme-Eau, in South-Kyme, near Dampford-Sluice, be continued, for the Purpose only of conducting Water into the Holland-Fen, in dry Seasons, for the Use of Cattle. And that Liberty shall be given to place Tunnels, not exceeding nine Inches square, where ever it may be judged necessary, through the Banks of the Channels, to convey Water into the several and respective Fens, for the aforesaid Reasons and Purposes.

“That there shall be a strict Prohibition, that no Persons whatever shall raise, or continue, any Banks to prevent the Waters, occasioned by Soakage, or Downfall, or otherwise, from taking their most natural Courses into the Main-River, except by the particular Directions of the Commissioners.

“That if any Catch-Water-Drains, or any private Drains, not subject or liable by the Act to be made at the general Expence, shall be found to be necessary towards the more effectual draining particular Lands, either of private Property, or Commons, the Commissioners, or any three or more of them, within or near to the said Parishes, Places, or Fens, in and through which such Drains should naturally pass, shall cause, and direct the same to be done in the most effectual Manner, by carrying the said Drains, impartially, through the lowest Lands, to the most convenient Outfall, into the Main-River, at the joint and proportional Expence of those who will be benefitted thereby; provided that every such Drain, to be made on the South-Side of the said River, be brought into the Main River, at, or above, Timberland-Dike.

“That the Commissioners shall have Power to direct the Digging of Earth, from any Lands on each Side the publick Channels, be they private Property, or Commons, for the

more effectual and speedy making, or repairing, the necessary Banks, within a moderate Distance only from such Banks.

“ That proper Communications shall be made to join the divided Parts of all such Lands, and Fens, as may happen to be separated by the new proposed Cut.

“ That the Commissioners shall be impowered, and obliged, to make reasonable Satisfaction for all Damages that may result from their putting this Act into Execution.

“ That no Staunch, or Land-Door, to keep back the Waters, be erected below Anthony's-Gate, without the Consent of the Proprietor of Firth-Bank, in the Parish of Sibsey.

“ That, in order effectually to secure the said Drainage, no Staunches, Land-Gates, or any other Works for Navigation, shall hereafter be made upon the River Witham, between the City of Lincoln and Town of Boston, that can pen up the ordinary Surface of the River, higher than within two Feet of the Surface of the natural Soil, on either Side ; and that there shall be erected, over-against every such Staunch, &c., a small House, with a Piece of Ground to be inclosed and annexed thereto, in order to place therein a proper Person, who shall be directed to take up the said Staunches, whenever the Surface of the said River shall rise higher than within two Feet of the Level of the Soil, on either Side : Provided nevertheless, that the City of Lincoln may have Power to make a Staunch, between a Place called the Stamp-End and the High-Bridge ; so that such Staunch be three Inches lower than the Staunch at Brayford-Head. And be it further provided, that if the said Staunch shall raise the Waters to such a Height as to be injurious to the Lands West of the City of Lincoln, that the Proprietors of the said Lands may then appeal to the Commissioners of the said Drainage, at their general Meeting, who shall enquire into the Truth thereof, and have Power to order the said Staunch to be lowered, or taken away, as to them shall seem reasonable.

“ That this Commission shall be absolutely independent of the Court of Sewers, and that the Court of Sewers shall in no wise interfere with the said Drainage.

“ As to what shall, or may concern the Navigation of the River Witham, from the City of Lincoln to the Town of Boston, in order to restore and preserve the same upon the said River, the said City of Lincoln and Town of Boston shall nominate three Commissioners, for each Town, for the purposes of Navigation, who, or a Majority of them, shall order and

direct whatever Works they shall judge necessary for such Purposes only, provided always that such Orders do not counteract or obstruct the general Drainage.

“ That the Charges of the said Works for Navigation, and all other Expences occasioned by the same (after each of the two Corporations, in their corporate Capacities, shall have contributed the Sum of) shall be defrayed by a Tonnage, not exceeding the Sum of per Ton.

“ That the said Commissioners shall be impowered to borrow, from Time to Time, Sums sufficient to enable them to carry the said Purposes of Navigation into Execution, at an Interest not exceeding Four per Cent. upon the Credit of the said Tonnage : And that the said Tonnage, after paying the said Interest, shall be applied towards discharging the Principal-Sums so borrowed.

“ That an account of the said Tonnage, and Application thereof, shall be laid, every Year, before the Commissioners appointed for the said Drainage.

“ That when the Sums, so borrowed, shall appear, to the said Commissioners of the Drainage, to be paid off and discharged, no greater Tonnage shall be continued than what shall be deemed necessary, by the Commissioners of the City of Lincoln and Town of Boston, with the the Consent of the said Commissioners of Drainage, for the upholding and maintaining the said Navigation, so as in Time to render the said Navigation as free, and as cheap, as the Nature of it will admit.

“ That all Persons, navigating on the said River, shall have full Liberty to pass, and re-pass, upon the Banks, and Forelands, of the said River, in order to the more convenient and expeditious drawing and landing their Boats, and Vessels : And that no Horses shall be permitted to pass, and re-pass the same, without the Consent of the Majority of the Body of Commissioners, appointed for Drainage, at their yearly Meeting.

“ That the New-River, and Banks, from the Grand-Sluice to Lincoln, be kept in good and sufficient Repair, at the general Expence.

“ That the said New-River shall go so near Anthony's-Gote, that the North-Bank thereof may lie on the Top of the said Gote.

“ That the Commissioners shall have Power to exchange Lands, between the Proprietors, with their Consents, which are separated by the New-Cut, from the Holland and Wildmore

Fens : And where such Agreement cannot be conveniently made, that Bridges shall then be made, by the said Commissioners, over the said Cut to the said Lands ; and also a Bridge to the Beets. And that whatever Lands are Private-Property, which happen to be cut through, or damaged by any of the New-Works, the same shall be paid for, according to the Value which shall be set upon them by an unconcerned Jury.

“ That Provision be made for every Person, being Tenant for Life in Right of his Wife, for Guardians, and other Circumstances.

“ Resolved further,

“ That a Subscription be proposed for raising a Sum, not less than Four Hundred Pounds, for defraying the Expences of an Application to Parliament, in order to obtain an Act, for carrying into Execution the afore-named several Resolutions, taken at Lincoln, the 15th, 16th, and 17th of November, 1753, for the Drainage, and Navigation, through the River Witham, upon the following Conditions : (viz.)

“ That, if the Act of Parliament be obtained, the Subscribers shall be reimbursed the Sums subscribed and paid, out of the first Monies which shall be raised by this Act : And, in Case the Application miscarries, the Sums unexpended shall be returned to the Subscribers, in Proportion to their respective Subscriptions.

“ That the Money shall be paid, at the Time of Subscribing, into the Hands of Mr. Vyner and Mr. Whicheote, to be lodged by them, with such Banker as they shall approve, to be drawn for as Occasion may require.

“ That, as soon as the above Subscription is obtained, a proper Person, or Persons, shall be employed to reduce the foregoing Resolutions into the Form of a Bill, to be presented to Parliament.

“ That a Meeting be held at the White-hart, in Lincoln, upon some Day in the Month of June, 1754, of which Notice will be given in the *Stamford*, and other Publick Papers, in Order to re-consider, and amend the said Bill, if necessary, and to prepare a Petition to be laid before the then next Sessions of Parliament.”

MR. GRUNDY'S PLAN.

“ At a Meeting held at Boston, October the 19th, 1753, it was thought most practicable (in order to reconcile the Interest of the several Parties concerned) to improve the Old-River Witham, by cutting off many curves thereof, and by making the Channel wider and deeper, in such Places where the same may be continued.

“ In pursuance of these Resolutions, I have made a View from Boston to Lincoln, in order, as nearly as I am capable, to propose a Method of executing this Work in such Manner as may be adequate to the general Drainage of all those Tracts of Low-Lands interested herein, in as compleat and perfect a Manner as the Nature of this Scheme will admit of.

“ In order to accomplish this End, it will be necessary to lay down some fundamental Rules, which, being truly observ'd, have, in my humble Opinion, a fair Probability of obtaining this desirable Effect.

PROPOSITIONS.

“ And FIRST, I am humbly of Opinion, that the new Bed or Bottom of this River ought to be of sufficient Depth, and Width, not only to answer the End of Draining all the Low-grounds in Billingshay-Dales, Holland, Wildmore, and West Fens; but also, of being a competent Outfall for all Waters that are proposed to be brought into it by Anthony's Gote, or any other Outfall therein.

“ SECONDLY, The Place the grand Stop-Sluice ought to be erected in, should be ascertained so as the most effectually to answer the Purposes of a general Drainage, the most cheaply to be executed, and the most universally to satisfy every Party interested herein.

“ THIRDLY, We ought to point out that particular Course, Situation, and Place, in which we propose to take off the greatest Curves and Irregularities of the Old-River, so as not to cut through or effect any private Property, or this as little as may be.

“ And FOURTHLY, We ought to propose in what Manner this Work may be done, so that, when compleated, it may be an equitable boundry betwixt Holland and Wildmore Fens, by restoring in one Place the same Number of Acres we may be obliged to borrow in another;

so that the Content of each of those Commons shall be just the same after this Scheme is executed as now.

ANSWERS.

“And FIRST, To find how deep the Bed, or Bottom of this New-River ought to be, I humbly apprehend will appear thus—From the Leveling-Notes you find, that the Floor of Anthony's-Gote is higher than the Surface of the Water (at low Water-mark) at the Primary-point, by 4 Feet 8 Inches : And that the Surface of the Land in Wildmore-Fen is higher than the said Primary-point by 11 Feet, therefore higher than the Floor of the said Gote by 6 Feet 4 Inches.

“And that the lowest Part of the Lands in Billingham-Dales is higher than the Surface of Low-Water-mark, at the Primary-point, by 11 Feet 1 Inch, and therefore higher than the Floor of Anthony's-Gote by 6 Feet 5 Inches.

“Which proves that the Bottom of the said New-River ought to be made as deep as the Floor of Anthony's-Gote, in order that when there is 4 Feet Water in the said River, there may be 2 Feet 4 Inches Fall from the lowest Lands into it.

“SECONDLY, I wou'd humbly propose the Grand-Sluice to be erected a little above Anthony's-Gote : Because in that Place it will be above all the Outfalls for private Drainage, of Wildmore, West, and Holland Fens, and Firth Bank, and therefore take off any Objections that may arise from those Quarters : And secondly, because the Ground thereabouts is infinitely stronger and more solid, than in the old Channel near Lodowick's-Gote, or any where lower down ; and being at a greater Distance from the Tides, the Sea-dams necessary for this Work, need not be so large, and therefore the Expence thereof will be greatly less than in any other lower Situation.

“To Answer the third Proposition, I must describe the Course I have fixed upon for making this New-River : Which is thus :

“From a little above Lodowick's-Gote, at A, I would humbly recommend a straight Cut to be made (within Land) nearly in a right Line to Anthony's-Gote, at B ; which Cut will only pass through about three or four Furlongs of Private-Property (belonging to Dr. Everard, of Horncastle, and Mr. Medley, of Spalding) and then will go wholly through the Common called Boston-Course : From the said Place at Anthony's-Gote, I propose keeping the Old-River about a Furlong, to C, and then to cut across Wildmore-Fen, in a right Line

to a Place in the Old-River, called Midsands, at D ; where I propose crossing the Old-River, or Haven, into Holland-Fen ; through which Fen, this New-Cut will make a small Curve southwards, to avoid the Old-Haven Banks, and will reach the Old-River, again a little above Langrike-Ferry at E, where it is again proposed to cross the Old-River into Wildmore-Fen, and to be carried from thence, in a straight Direction to Coppin-Sike, at F, and there again to cross the Old-River into Holland-Fen, and from thence to be carried in a straight Line to the South-Side of the Little-Beets ; by the Side of which, from G to H, within the Common, to be conveyed past Sir John Heathcote's Seven-Acres, at I, till we come to the Great-Beets, over-against Pearson's-Booth, at K, which Great-Beets we must cut through (to effect this Scheme) about two Furlongs to the Old-River, at L ; which Old-River I propose to pursue, from L, to Swine-Booth, and from thence to Chappel-Hill, at M, &c.

“ In the above Course, there will be no Private-Property cut through, save only 3 or 4 Furlongs of Dr. Everard's and Mr. Medley's Lands, near Boston, and about 2 Furlongs of Charles Reynold's, Esq. ; and Mr. John Tunard's Great-Beets, the rest being all Common.

“ To Minutely answer the fourth Proposition, will require an actual Survey of the Lands on each Side betwixt the New and Old River ; and therefore I can only speculatively say, That as nearly as I can judge from the Proportions of the Map, the above Course will make an equitable Distribution of the Lands to each Fen : But if it should not be exactly so, it may be varied without any Difficulty, there being no Private-Property in the Way.”

MR. GRUNDY'S ESTIMATES.

“ An Estimation of the Expence of making a New-River, from a little above Lodowick's-Gote, at A, nearly in a right Line to Anthony's-Gote, at B ; from thence to pursue the Old-River about a Furlong, to C ; and from thence, across Wildmore-Fen to a Place in the Old-River, called Midsands, at D ; and from thence to cross the Old-River into Holland-Fen ; and from thence, in a small Curve southwards, to a little above Langrike-Ferry, at E ; and from thence across the Old-River into Wildmore-Fen, to Coppin-Sike, at F ; and from thence across the Old-River through Holland-Fen, to the South-Side of the Little Beets, at G ; by the Side of which, and Sir John Heathcote's Seven-Acres, it continues to the Great-Beets, at H and I ; where it crosses to the Old-River, against Pearson's-Booth, at L ; and from thence in the Course of the Old-River to Lincoln (viz.)

	£	s.	d.
To Making the New-Cut from a little above Lodowick's-Gote, at A, to Anthony's-Gote, at B; being 2 Miles 6 Furlongs in Length, and to be made 70 Feet broad at the Top, 56 Feet at the Bottom, and 7 Feet deep: The Earth to be laid at 40 Feet Distance from the Brink of the River, in Bank-Fashion, will cost about	3194	08	00
The Land to be Cut through will contain $4\frac{1}{4}$ Acres, which, at 20 <i>l.</i> an Acre, comes to....	85	00	00
The Forelands and Cover of the Banks will contain 10 Acres 3 Roods, at 10 <i>l.</i> per Acre, comes to	107	10	00
To taking away the Old-Bauks, and making a Communication with the River	200	00	00
To Diking out 1 Furlong of the Old-River, from B to C. to answer the Depth of the other Work, will require to be 80 Feet wide at the Top, 56 Feet at the Bottom, and 12 Feet deep, will cost about	289	00	00
To Making this New-River from the said Place, at C, in the Direction DEFGHIKL, 70 Feet broad at the Top, 56 Feet at the Bottom, and 6 Feet deep: This Reach will contain 7 Miles 2 Furlongs in Length, and therefore will cost about	7022	08	00
To Crossing the Old-River three Times, and such additional Works as will attend the same	300	00	00
To Diking out the Old-River of the above Dimentions, from L, at Pearson's-Booth, to Chappel-Hill, at M, is in Length nearly a Mile, and must be made 72 Feet wide at the Top, 56 Feet wide at the bottom, and 8 Feet deep, will cost about	600	00	00
To the Grand Sluice to be erected a little above Anthony's-Gote, of 50 Feet Water-way, of sufficient Strength to support the said Capacity, per Plan thereof	2100	00	00
To three Miles above Chappel-Hill as per former Scheme ...	1200	00	00
To Diking out all the shallow Parts upwards, as per former Scheme	1000	00	00

	£	s.	d.
The Cut through Mr. Reynold's Land in the Beets, will contain 2 Acres, at 10 <i>l.</i> per Acre is 20 <i>l.</i> ; and the Cover, 4 Acres 3 Rood, 23 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> }	43	15	00
To unforeseen Accidents, and supervising the above Works	600	00	00
	<hr/>		
	£ 167	42	01 00
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“ An Estimate of such Works as may be necessary to be done to preserve the Mother-River ; and for providing for a general Drainage. (viz.)

To Scouring out Kyme-Eau, from Dampford-Sluice to the River ; and repairing the Banks thereof, so as to be 20 Feet seat, 6 Feet top, and 6 Feet high : And also to erecting a Sluice at the Mouth thereof, to prevent the River-Waters reverting up the said Eau, in Times of great Floods, will cost about	862	00	00
To Scouring out Billingham-Skirts, from North-Kyme-Bridge to the River ; and to making the Banks thereof 20 Feet seat, 6 Feet at the Top, and 6 Feet high, with a Sluice as above, about	648	00	00
To Scouring out Dun's-Dyke ; and repairing the Banks thereof, so as to be 15 Feet seat, 5 Feet Top, and 5 Feet high, will cost about	520	00	00
To Ditto of Nocton-Dike or Hare's-Head ; and repairing the Banks thereof, so as to be 12 Feet seat, four Feet top, and 4 Feet high, will cost about	300	00	00
To Ditto of Washinburgh-Beck, and Banks thereof, of the same Dimensions as Hare's-Head, will cost about	60	00	00
To Scouring out Tattershall-Bane ; and repairing the Banks thereof, so as to be 20 Feet seat, 6 Feet top, and 6 Feet high, and a Sluice at the Mouth, about	435	00	00
To Scouring out Barling's Eau ; and repairing the Banks thereof, so as to be 15 Feet seat, 5 Feet top, and 5 Feet high, will cost about....	140	00	00

	£	s.	d.
To Ditto Tupham Dike and Bardney Beck, about	120	00	00
To Reinstating Lodowick's-Gote, about	800	00	00
To cleaning out Anthony's-Gote, and making an Out-fall for Wildmore and West Fen Waters into the River....	60	00	00
To unforeseen Accidents attending these Works, and supervising the same	100	00	00
<hr/>			
	£ 4045	00	00
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“ An Estimate of such Works as concern Navigation only. (viz.)

To erecting a Double Pen-Lock by the Side of the Great-Sluice, with a Side-cut for that Purpose...	900	00	00
To building two Staunches	500	00	00
To Diking through the Town of Lincoln	275	00	00
To building two Watch-Houses, and purchasing the Ground	100	00	00
To unforeseen Accidents attending this Work and supervising the same	200	00	00
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	£ 1975	00	00
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“ An Estimate of the Expence of Scouring out the Old-River, according to it's present meandering Course, from a little above Lodowick's-Gote to Lincoln, of such Depth and Dimensions as is prescribed in the other Scheme. (viz.)

To Diking out the Old-Course of the River from Lodowick's-Gote to Anthony's-Gote, 77 Feet wide at the Top, 50 at the Bottom, and at a Medium 9 Feet deep, will be in Length 924 Roods, and will cost about	5266	16	00
--	------	----	----

	£	s.	d.
A Little above Anthony's-Gote a grand Stop-Sluice is proposed to be erected, across this new made River, of 50 Feet Water-way, to serve as well to stop the great Tides, as also the main River occasionally : this Sluice will cost about	2100	00	00
To Dike out the Old-River in it's present meandring Course, from Anthony's-Gote to Chappel-Hill (which is 15 Miles in Length) so as to be made 70 Feet wide at the Top, and 8 Feet deep, will cost about	15250	00	00
To three Miles above Chappel-Hill, to be scoured out as per other Scheme	1200	00	00
To Diking out all the shallow Parts of the River upwards, as per former Scheme	1000	00	00
To unforeseen Accidents that may attend this Work, and supervising	800	00	00
	£ 25616	16	00

JOHN GRUNDY."

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ACT OF PARLIAMENT, 1767.

Resulting from these Reports, Meetings, &c., two Acts of Parliament were passed. The first received the Royal Assent, 1767. It was entitled—

“ AN ACT for dividing a certain Fen called the Hant Huntre, Eight Hundred or Holland Fen, and certain other Commonable Places adjoining thereto, in the Parts of Holland, in the County of Lincoln :

“ Containing by Estimation 22,000 acres, be the same more or less, whereon the Owners and Proprietors of Houses built, or that may be built, on antient Toftsteads*

* The Holland Fen was flooded during the greater part of the year, being pretty much in the same state as the Wildmore and West Fens ; the manners and customs of the inhabitants were similar to those of the other Fens, hereafter to be described.

within the Eleven Parishes, Townships, or Places following; that is to say, Boston West, Skirbeck Quarter, Wyberton, Frampton, Kirton, Algarkirke, Fosdyke, Sutterton, Wigtoft, Swineshead, and Brothertoft, have Right of Common, and also within a certain Place called Dogdyke in the Parish of Billingham; and also there are several old inclosed Lands within the said Parishes, Townships, or Places, which have been always charged to the Dike-reeve Assessments for and towards the Support and Preservation of the said Fen :

The Boundary whereof was Billingham Dales, North Kyme Fen and South Kyme Low Grounds and South Kyme Fen, Lady Frazer's 600, Fen Horne Dyke, The Skirth, Hammond Beck on the South and South-East to the River Witham, and on the North by the old River Witham in its natural state, and by the new River Witham in its present state, and was drained by a Drain called the North Forty Foot or Lord Fitz William's Drain, commencing at Billingham Skirth, and adjoining the old Washway Bank, and running to the South-East of Brothertoft, and then by a straight line to Low Docks Gowt, also by another Drain called the South Forty Foot leading from Great Hale Fen through Holland Fen, called the South Forty Foot, and entered the Witham at the Black Sluice."

There appears also to have been a Cut, called the New Hammond Beck, to straighten the old Beck.

ACT OF PARLIAMENT, 1770.

Another Act of Parliament was passed in 1770, "For amending and rendering more effectual an Act made in the seventh year of the Reign of his present Majesty, intituled, 'An Act for Dividing a certain Fen called The Haute Huntre, Eight Hundred or Holland Fen, and certain other Commonable places adjoining thereto, in the Parts of Holland, in the County of Lincoln.

"And whereas the said Fen and other Commonable Places have in pursuance of the said Act been divided and allotted :

"But whereas the Posts and Rails in the Division Fences which have been erected pursuant to the Directions of the said Act, have been pulled down for many Miles, and the greatest Part thereof, together with a large Quantity of the Materials for completing the said Fences, destroyed :

“ And whereas if Power was given to the Commissioners for executing the said Act to take down the Remainder or such Part of the said Post and Rail Fencing as they shall judge necessary, and to dispose of the same, and of the Posts and Rails not yet destroyed, as well as of the Materials not yet made use of, and in lieu thereof to make proper Ditches, of a sufficient Width and Depth, to serve for Boundaries to the several Allotments, such Ditches would be less exposed to Damage from the violence of wicked and ill-disposed Persons, and would, from the Nature and Situation of the said Fen, be the best and most effectual Boundaries to the several Allotments, and would more fully answer the Intentions of the said Act.”

In consequence of the enclosing of Holland Fen in accordance with these two Acts of Parliament, serious Riots took place, and it may be interesting to here give an account of them, extracted from Marrat's *History of Lincolnshire* (1814.)

HOLLAND FEN.

“ The following transactions took place relative to the inclosure of Holland Fen :—On the 6th of June, 1768, a great number of people assembled at Hubbard's Bridge, in order to prevent the inclosure of Holland Fen ; where meeting with no opposition, they proceeded to Boston in a riotous manner, and demanded the papers relative to the said inclosure, which were kept by Mr. E. Draper, Attorney at Law. Having seized the box which contained them, they broke it open, tore them to pieces, and threw them into the streets. This done, they went to the house of Robert Barlow, Esq., and threatened to pull it down if he did not sign a paper, which purported that he should never again promote the inclosure of Holland-Fen ; this proposal he thought proper to comply with.

“ From Boston they proceeded to the houses of Messrs. Tunnard and Yerburch. at Frampton, threatening as before ; and put the whole neighbourhood in the greatest terror.

“ On the 3rd of July, a number of proprietors held a meeting at Sleaford, to consult about the most effectual method of quelling those riots, and to seize the persons of the ringleaders, the captain of whom was ‘ Gentleman Smith,’ of Swineshead, a person of no penetration, a mere sot, who having spent a handsome paternal estate, like Judas changed sides, and became a bold informer. A number of stout fellows, who had cut the river Witham, &c., were hired by the gentlemen to seize the rioters, but these taking the alarm, nearly a thousand of them assembled at Kirton Holm, when the bankers did not think fit to

attack them, On the 20th of July, Sir J. Cust, Sir C. Frederick, and other principal proprietors, met at Boston, and summoned their tenants to meet them there. Accordingly Messrs. Yerburgh's, both father and son, of Frampton, ordered the tenants of Lord Willoughby de Brooke, and their own, a formidable body of about twenty men, to meet them there completely armed. This formidable corps having entered Boston on horse-back, and having paraded three times round the butter-cross, were ordered to halt, till they received further orders from the commander in chief, respecting the future operations of the day : but it being whispered that either the constables, or the Scotch Greys, then lying at Boston, would lay hands on them, they were disbanded and never after called out into the field.

“ It had been concerted by the insurgents, before Smith surrendered, to fire Boston, but they were prevented by the Scotch Greys, four troops having been sent for that purpose. In March, April, May, and June, the rioters cut up the fences of the inclosure immediately they were put down ; several people saw them at work in the nights, but dared not to go near them. On the 26th of April, some troops of Albemarle's relieved the Scotch Greys.

“ July 1st, the insurgents, consisting of about two hundred men, threw up a foot-ball in the fen, and played for about two hours, when a troop of dragoons, some gentlemen from Boston, and four constables, having seized four or five of the rioters, committed them to Spalding Gaol. Dr. Shaw, of Wyberton, set three women-rioters at liberty, and the men were admitted to bail. On the 15th another ball was thrown up, and no person opposed them ; and on the 16th, five men were sent, by Sir C. Frederick, to guard Brothertoft. On the 29th, another ball was thrown up without opposition. In July, Mr. Moody, of Skirbeck, bought about six loads of firth hay, which was burnt, with another stack of about nine loads.

“ In 1770, Mr. J. Tunnard had about fifty fine sheep hamstrung, a barn was also burnt in the fen, at Hart's Grounds ; John Hobson, of Brothertoft, had a valuable mare hamstrung, but she recovered. Messrs. Tunnard and Yerburgh had some hay burnt, and Herbert Ingram, of Boston, had a horse shot worth twenty pounds. Robert Creasey, of the old Ferry House, had some ewes and lambs barbarously killed, by having their backs broken. On the 15th of June, a house was burnt in Pelham's Plot ; and on the 19th, Robert Barlow, Esq., had two coach horses poisoned, and so had Mr. Garfitt, Merchant. July the 21st, most of the gates in the fen, which had been hung to shut in each inclosed fen, were destroyed. November the 21st, John Woods, of Swineshead North End, was shot dead as

he was sitting by his own fire; supposed to have been committed lest the said Woods should turn informer.

“ On the 24th of December, Mr. J. Wilkes, commander of Sir C. Frederick’s guard at Brothertoft, was shot through a window shutter, and dreadfully wounded in the face; he lost an eye and was greatly disfigured.

“ On the 27th of October, 1771, Stephen Carnal, of Swineshead, had hired a plot of land in the said Fen, called Brand End, upon which he had a crop of oats, worth about £400; soon after they were stacked, the oats and a new barn were all burnt. Near the barn was a small house, in which young Carnal occasionally slept; and on the night in which the fire took place, he had but just got into bed, when he was terrified by the shining of the flames in his room; he immediately ran out, with nothing on but his shirt, when he was met by two men, who threatened to murder him, but he providentially escaped to his father’s house, about a mile off, though he was pursued part of the way by those villains.

“ October the 11th, Mr. Simpson, of Heckington, had a barn and about fifty lasts of oats burnt, on account of inclosing a piece of land in Holland Fen; a letter also was left, signifying, that unless he took off his men, he would be shot, and he took them off immediately.

“ On the 7th or 8th of November, Mr. T. Wright, of Algarkirk, had his barn, stable, &c., set on fire, in which was the produce of three acres (of wheat), all of which was consumed; and in the yard a mare, horse, and ass perished in the flames. Mr. Wright, jun., at the hazard of his life, led out his riding mare from the stable the instant before the roof fell in. The dwelling-house with much difficulty was saved; but a ram, a waggon, and several implements in husbandry were consumed. Mr. Wright sued the hundred for £200 damages.

“ About this time, Mr. Clayton, of Fosdike Inn, had a stack of hay set on fire, because he had taken some fen-land. On the 26th of February, 1772, Mr. Barlow’s house, in Boston, was fired into with balls; and on March the 7th, at night, the sitting-room of Mr. Watson, of Kirton, was shot into, and a threatening letter dropped, signifying, that unless he (Mr. W.) desisted encouraging the inclosure of the fen, he would be shot, and his house demolished. March the 12th and 14th, Gabriel Tunnard and Edward Monk, of Frampton, had each a stack burnt, on account of taking some fen land.

“April the 13th, about two o’clock in the morning, a barn and small house situated in a place called Clay Hills, were attacked by four or five armed men, who shot a man through the foot as he lay in bed. The men in the house soon afterwards saw the flash of a gun in the barn, which missed fire, on which one of them fired at the flash and killed John Tunnard; his companions immediately fled, leaving four guns behind them, which were taken to Boston.

“The beginning of July produced an extraordinary affair respecting the above transaction; W. Smith, of Kirton Holme, either through fear of being impeached, or in hopes of obtaining a great reward, went to London, and there deposed, before Sir John Fielding, that he was in company with John Tunnard, and that he and one Crampton, were the three persons that beset the house of John Woods, of Swineshead, November 21st, 1770, and that Tunnard was the man who shot the said Woods. Being (says Mr. Johnson, late school-master of Kirton, to whose manuscripts we are indebted for this account) on the inquest, I had an opportunity of seeing how the poor fellow was mangled; part of his skull was blown into the chimney corner, and stuck in the wall. August the 10th, 1772, the assizes at Lincoln began, when W. Smith appeared as King’s evidence against Crampton, who was arraigned, on the Coroner’s inquest, for the murder of John Woods, of Swineshead. The Counsel for the Crown set forth in their pleadings, that Crampton was concerned with another person in the said murder, who was admitted king’s evidence. W. Smith, the accomplice, proved, it is said, that himself and Crampton went to Wood’s house about eight o’clock at night, and at the distance of about four yards, discharged a gun, loaded with large shot, which blew his skull to pieces, and that he died immediately. The fact against the prisoner was fully proved, but we must observe that the whole weight of the evidence rested entirely on the oath of the accomplice. Crampton was called upon for his defence, when to the surprise of all present, he set up an *alibi*, supported by the oaths of two witnesses, who deposed that in the evening the murder was committed, that he (Crampton) was many miles distant from the place where the murder was perpetrated from the hour of five till eleven at night. The judge summed up the proceedings, and lamented that no evidence could be found to strengthen that of the accomplice, on which account he left the prisoner in the power of the jury, who after half-an-hour’s consultation, brought him in Not Guilty.

“With Woods it was supposed all mischief had died, but on the 25th of March, 1773, between nine and ten o’clock at night, some person or persons shot into the front window of

the house of Robert Barlow, Esq., at Boston, and shot Mrs. B. in the head, as she was sitting by the fire. Mr. Barlow had just left the room, otherwise, from the direction in which the ball came, he must have been killed in his chair. Soon after, a threatening letter was left in the door porch of John Tunnard, shoemaker, of Kirton, denouncing destruction to several individuals.

“All disturbances concerning the fen now ceased till the 19th of June following, when the materials of a barn, belonging to Mr. Blackwith, of Frampton, were burnt; as also a hovel, waggon, &c., belonging to Mr. Emmerson, of Kirton. About this time the disturbances ceased.”

It may be interesting to reprint here another extract from the same work (Vol. I., p. 136.)

HOLLAND FEN FLOODS.

“Anno 1763, in the winter and spring following was the greatest flood ever remembered. In the part called Eight Hundred, or Holland Fen, computed at 22,000 acres, not one single acre together was dry. The parish of Brothertoft was entirely surrounded with water, which flowed into the houses, so that those who could not leave them, were obliged to live in the upper stories. The banks could not withstand its fury, and the inhabitants were greatly alarmed; the banks of Bourn and Baston being broken, it was expected that the water would make its way over the old Hammond Beck bank, but after a great deal of labour in cradging, &c., the wind fortunately changed, and the country was saved. This flood was not occasioned by any high tide of the sea, but by continual rains, and the imperfection of the drainage at that time; the old Hammond Beck was then the only drain in those parts.

“Also, on the first of Jannary, 1779, many vessels on the Lincolnshire coast were driven nearly two miles in the marshes, much cattle was lost, Lynn market-place was two feet under water, and at Boston the tide flowed into several houses. It blew down the battlement from the west end on the north side of Kirton Church, and a pinnacle from that of Boston. This was called the New Year’s Gale.”

The following extract, also from the same work, throws light upon the origin of the riots referred to on a previous page (*ibid*, Vol. II. p. 186.)

BROTHERTOFT.

“Brothertoft is in the wapentake of Kirton, also in the parish of Kirton, in the parts of Holland, about five miles N.N.W. from Boston. Tradition says that this place was originally inclosed from the fens by a grant to two brothers ; hence the name, Brother-Toft.

“Before the inclosure of Holland-fen, and at that time, Brothertoft contained fifty-two houses and a considerable number of inhabitants ; but since that period, they have been on the decrease. To the people of this neighbourhood, the inclosure of Holland-fen appeared in the most odious light, it took from them what they esteemed their rights and privileges, and left them, as they thought, poor, miserable, and destitute of the common necessities of life. They had hitherto lived a kind of predatory life, kept a few geese, and some of the most opulent a few sheep, and perhaps a cow, or a mare which once a year brought them a foal ; but they had had freedom to range over a large track of land which they had hitherto considered to be their own property. A life of laziness is generally preferred ; and fishing and shooting and otherwise catching wild fowl, may be called amusement, rather than labour. Hence, like the Aborigines of North America, they lived a kind of lawless life, almost in a state of nature, and their ideas, wild as their native fens, were not very easily subjected to reason or control. About the year 1768, when the enclosure of Holland-fen was about to take place, the inhabitants of Brothertoft, as might be expected, were among the first to oppose it, and the fences that were put down in the day time, were, for a long time, pulled up during the succeeding night. Several riots took place, much mischief was committed, and some lives were lost ; in a house now occupied by a person of the name of Ogleby, Captain Wilks, who had been employed by Sir C. Frederic, was one night shot in the face through the window, some of his teeth, and one of his eyes, were knocked out, but he afterwards recovered. The shot rebounding from the fire place frightened some other men in the room, and a person of the name of Hammond crept under the bed to hide himself, at the same time believing and crying out that he was shot also, which was afterwards found not to be the case.

“It is no easy task to convince ignorant people that what may appear injurious to themselves, may still be for the benefit of the public at large ; with respect to the inclosure of Holland-fen, many who had used every effort to oppose it, lived afterwards to see their own folly. One man in particular, who had gained only a scanty subsistence by fishing and fowling, and whose character was not of the first rate for respectability, after the inclosure

had taken place, rented land, and accumulated much wealth. He died lately, possessed of from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds ; and had for many years been respected by all who knew him."

Mr. Young, in his *Agricultural Survey* (1799), furnishes us with an illustration :

" Matthew Allan, of Brothertoft, before the Inclosure and Draining of Holland Fen, paid 20s. rent for a Cottage and Croft ; his stock on the Fen, was 400 Sheep, 500 Geese, 7 Milch Cows, 10 or 12 young Horses, and 10 young Beasts : such a person, if ever one was heard of, must have been injured by an Inclosure, for never could be known a more perfect contrast between the rent and stock of holding. He now rents about 50 acres of the Inclosure at 25s. an acre, has a wife, 5 children, and 2 servants, and greatly prefers his present situation, not only for comfort, but profit also."

There were several Hamlets on small Islands within the Holland, Wildmore and West Fens, viz. :—Brothertoft, the Great and Little Beats in the Holland Fen ; Newham, The Hermitage and Honeld House in the Wildmore Fen ; Firth Bank, Swincot, Westhouse, Medlam and Moorhouse in the West Fen.

There appear to have been several Intakes or Inclosures within the Fen, viz. :—Brothertoft which contained many inhabited Houses and a Chapel ; another called the " New Intake," containing 156 acres, 1 rood, 5 perches ; the " Little Beats," containing 64 acres, 2 roods, 3 perches ; the " Second New Intake," containing 58 acres, 1 rood, 18 perches ; Another Intake belonged to Sir G. Heathcott, containing 12 acres, 2 roods, 30 perches ; there were also " the Great Beats," containing on the south side of the New River respectively 57 acres, 0 rood, 13 perches, and 1 acre, 1 rood, 28 perches ; and on the north side of the River, 25 acres, 2 roods, 28 perches ; and, lastly, another Intake, called " the Firth," adjoining the south-east corner of the Hammond Beck.

The great improvement for Draining the Holland Fen, Wildmore Fen and West Fen, and improving the Outfall of all the land up to Lincoln, was by a give-and-take line of New River between Holland Fen and Wildmore Fen, resolved upon at Sleaford, Jan. 13th, 1762 ; (see *Grundy's Report*.) It extended from Chapel Hill to Langrick Ferry, and from there to Anthony's Gowt, and a New Projected Line from Anthony's Gowt to Boston. This improvement caused great excitement at the time.

Another scheme was projected by Mr. Grundy, C.E., of Spalding, for a straight line from Chapel Hill to Anthony's Gowt, which would have been cut wholly through Wildmore Fen; consequently part of that Fen would have been on the south side of the River; on this account therefore, this scheme was abandoned, and an equal line between the Fens eventually adopted, under the direction of the same gentleman. This work was carried out in conjunction with

THE GRAND SLUICE.

The foundation stone of the Sluice was laid by Charles Amcotts, Esq. (then Member of Parliament, and also Mayor of Boston, see Thompson's *History of Boston*,) on the 26th of March, 1764, and it was opened by Mr. Langley Edwards, the Engineer, on the 15th of October, 1766, in the presence of a very large concourse of spectators, estimated as numbering ten thousand persons, among whom were many of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom.

The author would here interpolate a few personal memoranda, in the hope that such may be found interesting.

William Banks, Esq., of Revesby Abbey (so called, although not built on the actual site of the original abbey, but on the Dairy Farm and Hay Farm belonging thereto), took great interest in the Drainage Works, and especially the Grand Sluice, so at the completion of that work, a very large company of people paid him a visit at his residence. Mr. Banks being at the time in an infirm state of health, had to be brought out of the Abbey in a chair; however he provided the concourse with a bountiful treat. His heir (afterwards Sir Joseph Banks, the eminent botanist and co-worker with the circumnavigator Captain Cooke), then a young man of the age of twenty-three, was probably present on this occasion, and this may have given rise to the annual custom which he introduced, when the estate passed into his hands, of providing at the Abbey a plentiful supply of bread, cut-up beef and very strong ale, for all comers,—the ale being brought out in buckets and served in horns,—the temporary possessor of each of which had the privilege of the next dip into the bucket, before passing it on to his successor.

On the occasion of Revesby Fair (about the 21st of October), Sir Joseph took great delight in visiting the Fair at Revesby Green, and, together with his company, sitting in carriages, viewing the jingling matches, jumping in sacks, &c., which, amid much merriment,

formed an invariable feature of these gatherings, followed in the evening by a dance among the tenants, their friends and the Abbey servants.—If, on his road home, he failed to see a number of his people “jolly,” he was wont to remark that “his ale was not brewed strong enough.” He carried this custom on, almost to the last of his life, and his yearly visit to the Abbey in October was looked forward to for months beforehand,—partly perhaps on account of his profuse hospitality to his tenants and others. The lower classes almost invariably called him “Cousin Joe.” The Author’s grandfather saw the Sluice-finishing scene ; and he himself, on many occasions, took part in early life in the revels at Revesby Fair, as here mentioned. Sir Joseph Banks took a prominent part in the promotion of the Inclosure of the Fens.

PRODUCTIONS OF THE FENS.

The Wildmore, Holland and West Fens were, previous to the execution of the Drainage Works, covered with water, nearly throughout the winter, to an average depth of from three to six feet ; a great number of the Fen-side men were good shots, using a horse (specially equipped) for the purpose of aiding them in their fowl-shooting, others were in “shouts” or “shallops” of which numbers might be seen from the Fen-sides, drifting like logs of wood and only showing signs of being occupied by the reports and smoke from the guns.—In the summer the water evaporated, and left a crop of “water-grass” which formed a capital bed for turf, and for the birds to nest in ; this, when the ground became dry, was stocked with horses, asses, cattle, sheep, and geese, the latter predominating to a great extent,—a frontager, named Green, living at Moorhouses, having had at one time a stock of two thousand old brood geese.

It is remarkable that each brood would find its own special locality in the Fen, the old geese always leading the young ones to the same place ; the gooseherd generally knew the old geese by their feathers. The nests were made in tiers, as high as the gooseherd could reach, each being about one foot six inches wide and one foot high ; in front of the nests were two layers of sods, with a hole cut in the middle for the bird to feed through : they were taken off to water twice a day, and if the gooseherd made the mistake of putting a goose in the wrong nest, it soon shewed dissatisfaction. The geese were pulled twice a year, the young ones being sold off in the spring, and taken in droves towards London. Ducks were found in these Fens in abundance.

The West Fen had a breed of good cart horses, and a Mr. John Carter, living on the Fen-side at Kirkby,* possessed a very large stock, which ran nearly wild; by these horses and his industry he realised a considerable sum of money, for, when he died, five hundred spade-ace guineas were found in a secret place in his house.

The Wildmore Fen was occupied by cattle and horses,—a particular breed of the latter (said to be of Arabian descent), not large, but generally of a grey colour, and known as “Wildmore Tits,” were in much request. Certain inhabitants of Marcham, adjoining Wildmore Fen, who dealt in these and other horses, were generally called “The Pepper Gang,” and any person who got a faulty horse was pretty certain of being told that “he was peppered.” In frosty weather these horses were frequently injured by getting upon the ice.

The horses, like the geese, strayed off to different places in the Fen, sometimes causing much trouble over their recovery.

Mr. Young says (*Agricultural Survey*, page 223): “Also great numbers of sheep were depastured in the Wildmore Fen; Mr. Thackery clipped twelve hundred sheep on an average during one year, but there were great losses of sheep by rot. In 1793, there were forty thousand sheep, or one per acre, rotted on the three Fens, nor was this the only evil, for the number stolen was incredible, they were taken off in whole flocks.”

Before the inclosure of this Fen there were two very large Inns in the neighbourhood, viz.: “Tumby Swan” (at the corner of the road, leading from the Horncastle Road to Marcham) and the other named “Leads Gates” (or “Les Yates” according to Stukeley and Marrat), (situate on Coningsby Moor at the entrance of the Fen,) which accommodated the great droves of cattle, horses, sheep, &c., passing from north to south by a drift-road to Langrick Ferry, where another large house was placed for their entertainment; this road led through Holland Fen to Swineshead; at the time of the Horncastle Fair, the traffic was immense, and the number of people assembled at these houses made each like a fair.

Great commotions frequently arose through parties stocking the Holland, West, and Wildmore Fens, clandestinely with cattle, particularly Scotchmen, “One of the name of Birtwhistle, who took up his abode in Skirbeck, and stocked the Fens with Scotch beasts; it was said there, that as the Duke of Buccleugh took many beasts as rent in kind, this person was a contractor for vast numbers,—seven or eight hundred, or even one thousand,—which

* His was the ninth house from the Fen-gate,—the Author's grandfather living in the seventh.

The forme or Fashion of the severall marks or Brands belonging to each Towne in the Soake of Bullingbrooke & East Holland as followeth.

<i>Boston</i>	Ɔ		<i>Steeping</i>	h
<i>Skirbeck</i>	⚮		<i>Thorpe</i>	✂
<i>Fishtoft.</i>	⌚		<i>Spilsby</i>	ſ
<i>Frieston</i>	†		<i>Raithby</i>	⌘
<i>Butterwick</i>	⚬		<i>Hundleby</i>	⌚
<i>Bennington</i>	Ɔ		<i>Bullingbrooke</i>	⌚
<i>Leverton</i>	⌚		<i>Lusby</i>	Y
<i>Leake</i>	†		<i>Enderby</i>	⌚
<i>Sibsey</i>	✂		<i>Asgarby</i>	⌚
<i>Stickney</i>	✂		<i>Hairby</i>	⌚
<i>Stickford</i>	⌚		<i>Morningsby</i>	⌚
<i>West Keale</i>	⊙		<i>Revesby</i>	†
<i>East Keele</i>	⚮		<i>East Kirkby</i>	†
<i>Toyntons</i>	x		<i>Hagna by</i>	⚬
<i>Halton</i>	H			

he “summered” [in these Fens], and then drove them into Norfolk, to sell for turnip-keeping ; it is said his father had made much money by this practice.” (Young’s *Agricultural Survey*.)

The West, Holland, and Wildmore Fens were depastured by cattle, horses, sheep, donkeys and geese during the summer ; every frontager had a right to stock, without limit as to number, as had also the inhabitants of the following towns and villages, viz. :—Asgarby, Bolingbroke, Mavis Enderby, Hagnaby, Halton, Hareby, Hundleby, East Keal, West Keal, East Kirkby, Lusby, Miningsby, Raithby, Revesby, Sibsey, Stickney, Stickford, Spilsby, Little Steeping, Thorpe, Toynton-All-Saints, Toynton-St.-Peter’s, and Frith Bank, in the Soke of Bolingbroke. Each of these towns or villages had their special mark or brand : all the horses and asses were branded on the hoof, the cattle on different parts of the body ; all the geese and ducks had their feet marked by cutting the toes and the web of the foot. (*See Illustration of Brands*.)

Upon driving the West Fen, on the 16th and 17th September, 1784, there were found to be three thousand nine hundred and thirty-six head of horned cattle, and in dry years it was perfectly white with sheep. (*Agricultural Survey*, page 227.)

The inhabitants raised turf for fuel from any part best suited for the purpose ; when dried, it was raised in little squares, ritted out into shape convenient for carting away, and then stacked up in large ricks at the different homesteads, to serve as fuel ; the whole of the Fen-side people, and some in the interior also, burnt turf all the year round ; the turf fires were slow in ignition, but when fire burst forth, they gave an intense heat.—The fireplaces, as was then customary, being very large and open, a person could conveniently sit in each corner ; it is said that men often tied the leg-bone of a horse before their shins to prevent them from being scorched.

The ashes, when hot, were utilised for cooking bread, cakes, or pies ; a hole being made in the pile, and the floor cleaned by means of a pair of bellows, the pie, cakes, bread, &c., were covered by an iron bell, which in turn was heaped over with the hot ashes, resulting in first-rate cookery. This mode of making a rough-and-ready oven, had probably continued from the time when inhabitants first settled by the sides of the Fen, or at any rate from a very early period.

The people in the West and East Fens commonly gathered fodder from the East Fen for the use of their cows and young beasts during the winter, as will be mentioned in the account relating to the East Fen.

The greater part of the cottages on the Fen-side were stud-and-mud built, containing, as a rule, three rooms, viz. : a living room, a parlour, and a chamber over the living room,—the latter reached by a ladder,—but frequently the floors both of the living room and the parlour were of dried clay ; the fireplace had a brick or stone back, and the upper part of the chimney was formed of wood and plaster, with occasionally, but not always, a brick top ; a few houses were on a larger scale, but nearly all were constructed in the same manner.

During the winter season the West Fen was tenanted by great numbers of ducks of every description, wild geese, and, sometimes, a flock of swans ; in summer time it became the abode of numerous species of birds, the most noticeable being the kite, the buzzard, the sparrow hawk, and the heron ; these were however only visitors to the Fen, not breeding therein.

The kite, sparrow hawk and buzzard were great enemies of the young geese and ducks, and required continual watchfulness on the part of the different owners ; the birds breeding in the Fen were : the pyewipe, the snipe, the redshank, and the ruffs—the latter being most beautiful birds.

A particularly fine breed of kite existed up to a few years ago in Tamby and Enlshy Woods, as also in the Woods skirting the Carr Dyke at Branston, Nocton, and Blankney,—however, a bird-fancier from London took up his quarters in the neighbourhood, and shot them in detail while on their roosts, not leaving even one pair to carry on the race.

The following remarks on ruffs and reeves are given in *Cassell's Natural History*.

“ In consequence of the ornamental plumes on the neck during the breeding season, the male is called the ruff, while the female—to whose attire no such addition is made, is termed the reeve. Montague says : ‘ The long feathers on the neck and side of the head, in the male, that constitute the ruff and auricles, are of short duration, for they are scarcely completed in the month of May, and begin to fall the latter end of June. The change of these singular parts is accompanied by a complete change of plumage ; the stronger colours, such as purple, chestnut and some others, vanish at the same time, so that in their winter dress

they become more generally alike, from being less varied in their plumage; but we observed that those who had the ruff more or less white, retained that colour about the neck after the summer or autumnal moulting. We noticed that in confinement their annual changes never varied, every spring produced the same coloured ruff and other feathers, but the tubercles on the face never appeared; a young male that was taken destitute of the ruff in breeding season, whose plumage was most cinerous, except about the head and neck, put on the ruff in confinement the next spring for the first time, which was large, and the feathers were a mixture of white and chestnut, the scapulars and breast also marked with chestnut; and in the succeeding autumnal moulting he reassumed his former cinerous plumage.'

“The same writer observes that ‘the trade of catching ruffs is confined to few persons, and scarcely repays their trouble and the expense of nets. These people live in obscure places on the verge of the fens, and are found out with difficulty; for few, if any, birds are ever bought but by those who make a trade of fattening them for the table. Mr. Towns, the noted feeder at Spalding, assures us his family had been a hundred years in the trade; and they had supplied George the Second and many noble families in the kingdom. He undertook at the desire of the late Marquis of Townsend, when that nobleman was lord-lieutenant of Ireland, to take some ruffs to that country, and actually set off with twenty-seven dozen from Lincolnshire, left seven dozen at the Duke of Devonshire’s, at Chatsworth, continued his route across the kingdom to Holyhead, and delivered seventeen dozen alive in Dublin, having lost only three dozen in so long a journey, confined and greatly crowded as they were in baskets which were carried upon two horses. During our stay at Spalding, we were shown into a room where there were about seven dozen males and a dozen females, and of the former there were not two alike. Our intrusion to choose some birds drove them from their stands, and compelling some to trespass upon the premises of others, produced many battles. It is a remarkable character of these birds that they feed most greedily the moment they are taken, a basin of bread and milk or boiled wheat, placed before them, is instantly contended for, and so pugnacious is their disposition that they would starve in the midst of plenty, if several dishes of food were not placed among them, at a distance from each other.

“‘Their actions in fighting are very similar to those of a game-cock; the head is lowered, and the beak held in a horizontal direction, the ruff, and indeed every feather more or less distended, the former sweeping the ground as a shield to defend the more tender parts, the auricles erected and the tail partly spread; upon the whole assuming a most

ferocious aspect. When either could obtain a firm hold with the bill, a leap succeeded, accompanied by a stroke of the wing, but they rarely injured each other.

“ ‘ Few ruffs, comparatively speaking, are taken in the spring, as the old birds frequently pine and will not readily fatten. The principal time is in September, when the young birds are on the wing; these are infinitely more delicate for the table, more readily submit to confinement, and are less inclined to fight. If this plan was generally enforced by the proprietors of fen land, or made a bye-law amongst themselves, the breed would not be so reduced; but there are still fowlers who make two seasons, and by catching the old birds in the spring, especially the females, verify the fable of the goose and the golden eggs; the destruction of every female in the breeding season is the probable loss of four young.’ ”

The noise made by these birds on a summer's evening was something extraordinary. Their habits were very peculiar in the breeding season; while the hens were sitting, the ruffs would assemble several times each day for a gambol on some selected spot, usually about eight yards in length by three wide; this they soon paddled down into a smooth flooring; seen from a distance these sports presented a singular effect. The birds were generally caught by means of two stakes driven in the path from head to head, a string being extended between these to which horse-hair snares were attached, for the purpose of entangling their feet.

The author can add his testimony to that of the writer before quoted as to their numbers, he himself having captured twenty in one summer, as also the statement that immediately these birds were captured, they would eat greedily of “ *creed* ” wheat, and—as he says—every one of them would have a dish to himself, hence the common Fen-side saying, “ the ruff is a gentleman, and won't eat off another's plate.” These birds all varied in their colour.

At one time the skeletons of dead animals were frequently to be seen in the Fen, with hawks feeding upon them while any flesh remained, but as soon as bones came into request for manuring purposes, they were gathered up as eagerly and carefully as were the stones enclosing diamonds in South America some years ago.

Foxes were terrible enemies of geese and ducks, and also required much watchfulness, as they were addicted to leaving the woods and high land by night, and visiting the Fens for their prey. A common evening sound in all the Fens, — West, Wildmore and Holland,—

was that of the vigorous blast of cows' horns, the blowing of which was the customary course adopted for scaring the foxes away.

Of course all the frontagers to the Fens were opposed to Inclosure, but as the Land and toft owners, who were the parties principally to be benefited thereby, were in favour of it, the opposition of the former had no effect. Nevertheless, as has been previously said, considerable rioting took place on the Inclosure of Holland Fen.

ACTS OF PARLIAMENT FOR IMPROVING THE WITHAM.

To return to the River Witham, we find that the First Improvement of it in modern times was effected under an Act of Parliament passed in 1762, entitled "An Act for Draining and Preserving certain low lands, lying on both sides of the River Witham in the County of Lincoln, and for restoring and maintaining the navigation of the said River from the High Bridge in the City of Lincoln, through the Borough of Boston to the Sea."

By this Act the river was improved and embanked, particularly between Dogdyke and Langrick Ferry, Anthony's Gowt and Boston, and on the work being carried out, the length of the river between Chapel Hill and Boston was shortened from seventeen-and-a-half to eleven miles, a difference of six-and-a-half miles; the dimensions from Chapel Hill were directed to be seventy feet broad at the top, fifty-six feet at the bottom, and seven feet deep, the earth being laid forty feet distance from the brink of the river.

The river was improved and straightened up to Lincoln at the same time, under the same Act, but not on the same scale as that adopted between Chapel Hill and Boston.

"The lands situate, lying, and comprised within the several Parishes, Townships, Precincts, Territories and Places, hereinafter mentioned, that is to say, such of them as are on the South side of the River Witham do lie in the City of Lincoln, Lincoln Common, Canwick, Washingborough, Heighington, Branston, Potterhanworth, Nocton, Dunston, Metherringham, Blankney, Linwood, Martin, Timberland, Timberland Thorpe, Walcot, Billingham, Billingham Dales, Dogdyke, North Kyme Fen, South Kyme Fen, Hart's Grounds, Great Beets, Little Beets, Rakes, Heckington Fen, including Lady Frazer's Six-hundred-acres, Ewerby, Howell, Asgarby, Great Hale, Little Hale, and some low lands in Swineshead, Brothertoft, Anwick, Ruskington, Dorrington, Digby, and Holland Fen, and such of

them as are on the North side of the River Witham, do lie in Monks, Greetwell, Willingham, Fiskerton, Barlings, Stainfield, Bardney, Southrey, Tapholme, Bucknall, Horsington, Stixwold, Swinesike, Woodhall, Thornton, Kirkstead, Tattershall Thorpe, Tattershall, Coningsby, Marcham, Hundle-house, Revesby, Middleham, Moorhouse, Meerbooth, Hermitage, Newholme, West-house, Langrike, Langworth, Swinecote, Hagnaby, Stickney, Wildmore Fen and West Fen ; and the said low lands and fens are bounded as follows, that is to say by the high grounds of Lincoln, Canwick, and Washingborough, and thence by the Carr Dyke from Washingborough to Thorpe Tilney, and by the high grounds of Thorpe Tilney and the Carr Dyke, from Tilney aforesaid to Billingham Skirth ; by the high grounds of Walcot and Billingham aforesaid, Digby, Dorrington, Ruskington, Anwick, Ewerby, Howell, Heckington, Great Hale, and Little Hale, from Billingham aforesaid to Helpringham Fen ; on the west by the Common Fens of Helpringham, Bicker and Donnington, and by the southern boundary of Holland Fen, from Helpringham Fen aforesaid to Boston ; on the south by Kirton Holme, the south bank of Old Hammond Beck, Boston West, Sibsey, and Stickney, from Boston aforesaid to Stickney Bar Green on the east, and by the high grounds of Hagnaby, grounds of East Kirkby, high grounds of Revesby and Marcham, grounds of Tumbly and high grounds of Coningsby, from Stickney Bar Green aforesaid to Tattershall Bane, and the high grounds of Tattershall, Tattershall Thorpe, Kirkstead, Towery Moor, Woodhall, Stixwold, Horsington, Bucknall, Tapholme, Southrey, Bardney, Stainfield, Barlings, Fiskerton, Willingham, Greetwell, and Monks ; from Tattershall Bane aforesaid to Lincoln, in the north-east and north, and from the said River Witham to the high grounds of Lincoln Common, leaving Sineil Dyke twenty yards on the west."

This Act of 1762 recited the names of the respective Lands to be charged on "both sides of the River Witham, and also of the several parishes wherein all the low lands are intended to be charged with the best computation that can be obtained at present, of the number of acres on both sides, viz. : 96,431 acres ; as shewn below.

<i>South Side of River Witham.</i>						<i>North Side of River Witham.</i>					
					ACRES						ACRES
Lincoln	-	-	-	-	175	Monks	-	-	-	-	93
Lincoln Common	-	-	-	-	49	Greetwell	-	-	-	-	217
Canwick	-	-	-	-	360	Willingham	-	-	-	-	243
Washinburgh with Heighington	-				1904	Fiskerton	-	-	-	-	697
Branston	-	-	-	-	1932	Barlings	-	-	-	-	156

Potter-Hanworth - - - -	1482	Stainfield - - - -	480
Nocton - - - -	2279	Bardney - - - -	585
Dunston - - - -	1304	Southrey - - - -	347
Metheringham - - -	2445	Tupholme - - - -	74
Blankney with Linwood - -	2687	Bucknall - - - -	445
Martin - - - -	2554	Horsington - - - -	321
Timberland - - - -	1935	Stixwold - - - -	515
Timberland Thorpe - - -	4559	Swinsike - - - -	208
Walcot - - - -		Woodhall - - - -	20
Billinghay - - - -		Thornton - - - -	7
Billinghay Dales and Dog Dike -	2092	Kirkstead - - - -	189
North Kyme Fen - - -	1800	Tatttershall and Tattershall Thorpe -	880
South Kyme Fen - - -	1650	Coningsby - - - -	168
Hart's Grounds - - -	480	Mareham - - - -	100
Great Beets - - - -	60	Huddle-House - - -	80
Little Beets - - - -	34	Revesby - - - -	200
Rakes - - - -	60	Meddleham - - - -	100
Heckington Fen - - -	1500	Moorhouse - - - -	100
Mr. Fane's 600 or Lady Frazer's -	600	Meer-Booth - - - -	60
Ewerby - - - -	1200	Hermitage - - - -	5
Howell and Asgarby - - -	450	Newholm - - - -	40
Great Hale - - - -	1950	Westhouse - - - -	160
Little Hale and some low lands in } Swineshead - - - -	1860	Widall - - - -	-
Brothertoft - - - -	50	Langrike - - - -	300
Anwick - - - -	1500	Frith Bank - - - -	250
Ruskington - - - -		East Kirkby - - - -	-
Donington - - - -		Langworth - - - -	-
Digby - - - -		Swinecote - - - -	-
Holland Fen - - - -	22200	Stickford - - - -	-
		Hagnaby - - - -	-
		Stickney - - - -	240
		Wildmore Fen - - - -	12000
		West-Fen - - - -	16000
<hr/> <i>Total on South Side -</i>		<i>Total on North Side -</i>	35280
	61151		

				ACRES
Total on South Side	-	-	-	61151
Total on North Side	-	-	-	35280
				<hr/>
Total on both Sides	-	-	-	96431 "
				<hr/>

As will be seen on reference to pages 25 and 26 of this work, these figures were taken from *Grundy's Report*, published in 1753.

Another Act was passed in 1808, "for Rendering more effectual an Act of His present Majesty, for draining certain Low Lands lying on both sides the River Witham, in the County of Lincoln, and for restoring the Navigation of the said River from the High Bridge in the City of Lincoln to the Sea."

By this Act it was ordered "to make cuts, scour out, widen, deepen, straighten and embank the said River Witham, or cause such cuts to be made and the said River to be cleansed, scoured out, widened, deepened, straightened and embanked from the Grand Sluice at Boston, to the High Bridge in Lincoln, in manner and of the several Dimensions following; that is to say, from the said Grand Sluice, to a Place called Dorman's Dike or How Bridge Tunnel, with a Bottom Fifty Feet wide, and from thence a new Cut to be formed in a straight Line to near Tattershall Bridge, with a Bottom Forty Feet wide; from the End of the said Cut to Stixwold Ferry, the Bottom of the said River Witham to be Thirty-four Feet wide; from thence to Horsley Deeps Thirty Feet wide; and another New Cut to be made in a straight line, with a Bottom of the said last-mentioned width, from Horsley Deeps to join the said River again nearly opposite to the Woad Houses in the Parish of Fiskerton; and from the End of the said Cut to the Lock intended to be erected in the Parish of Washingborough, the bottom of the said River to be Twenty-eight Feet wide.

And that the Bottom of the said River and Cuts from the Grand Sluice to the said Lock, shall be carried on a Level with the Sill of the said Grand Sluice, and that from the said Lock in the Parish of Washingborough to the present Lock at Stamp End, the said River Witham shall be not less than Twenty-four Feet wide at the Bottom."

Under this Act the Witham was straightened in the Parish of Fiskerton, owing to which, part of Washingborough Parish is now on the Fiskerton side of the river. This Act of 1808 was only carried out in part.

Having given the substance of this 1808 Act, we pass to that of 1812: “for rendering more effectual an Act of His present Majesty, for draining Lands lying on both sides the River Witham, in the County of Lincoln, and restoring the Navigation of the said River; and for repealing another Act of His present Majesty in relation to the said Drainage and Navigation.”

By a clause in this Act, the Act of 1808 “and all and every the Clauses, Powers, Provisoos, Matters and Things therein contained,” were repealed.

By another Clause in it, a Company of Proprietors for the Navigation was appointed; another clause authorized the said Company of Proprietors “to cleanse, scour out, widen, deepen, straighten and embank the said River Witham, or cause the same to be cleansed, scoured out, widened, deepened, straightened and embanked, from the said Grand Sluice to the High Bridge in the City of Lincoln, in manner and of the several average dimensions following, that is to say from the said Grand Sluice to a certain stream called Kyme Ean, with a bottom of Fifty Feet at the least, and from thence to a Bridge over the said River Witham, called Tattershall Bridge*, with a bottom of Forty-five feet, and thence to a certain Lock to be erected in the Cut aforesaid to be made near Horsley Deep, with a bottom Thirty-six feet, the Bed of the River at the said Lock to be Six feet at the least under the level of the Guage Mark on the doors of the said Grand Sluice. Its Bottom formed upon a regular inclined plane for the whole of the space aforesaid, and the width of the said River to be so formed that there may not be a less waterway on the average for the respective distances aforesaid, than of the several dimensions afore specified, and the turnings and bends therein to be straightened and altered where necessary, so that the waters of the said River in times of flood may not be obstructed or retarded in their passage to and through the said Grand Sluice to the Sea, and from the said intended Lock in the said new Cut, for the remainder of the said Cut, and also the said River Witham from thence to another Lock intended to be erected at or near the present Lock at Stamp End, the said Cut and River shall be respectively formed of the dimensions following, that is to say with a bottom of Thirty feet immediately above the said Lock in the Parish of Branston, and the width of the

* This bridge was probably the first erected over the Witham, by virtue of the Act of Parliament passed the 33rd George III., 1793, for making a Turnpike Road from Tattershall to Sleaford; indeed this is the only bridge over the Witham between Boston and Lincoln, at the present time; it was rebuilt by the Company of Proprietors in carrying out the Works under this Act of 1812.

said bottom of such Cut and of the River above the same to diminish gradually, so as to be Twenty-four feet wide only at the said intended Lock at or near the Stamp End."

A clause on page 13 of this Act (1812,) says : " The said Company of Proprietors are hereby also authorized, directed and required to scour out, widen, deepen, and enlarge the said Bargate Drain, and a certain Drain called Sincil Dyke, nearly to the Junction of the said Sincil Dyke with the said River Witham, and form a Delph from thence along the back of the South Bank of the said River to Horsley Deeps below the said intended Lock in the Parish of Branston, of sufficient capacity for the passage of the waters to be discharged by means of the said Sincil Dyke into the said Navigation below the said Lock ; and shall likewise make a Delph of sufficient dimensions along the back of the North Bank of the said River from the said Stanch at or near to the said Barlings Ean."

In carrying out the Act of 1812, a great riot took place at Bardney, by the Navvies ; they were at work on that part of the river from the village of Southrey by Bardney to opposite Longwood, including the new line which cut off the corner of the Witham in the parish of Branston ; Mr. James Townsend being the Resident Engineer. About nine hundred men were employed on this section.

A dispute arose on a particular Friday between the navvies and a baker named Edmonds, from Wragby, who supplied them with bread ; the riot began on the west side of the river, at a public-house with the sign of " The Plough,"—they drove the landlord away from the house, took out his barrels, and drank the beer ; having taken his sign down, they also took the baker's basket and bread, and, crossing the river, proceeded up to the village of Bardney, one man carrying another cross-legged on his shoulders, the " rider " carrying the captured sign, holding it up in his hands, and being surrounded by a mob armed with their plank-hooks and other tools. They pelted the baker with his bread, and hung his basket on the top of a tree in the village ; they then attacked the " Bottle and Glass " public-house,—fetched the barrels of beer out of the house, knocked the ends out and drank the ale ; Mr. Benson, a person who was then the landlord of the " Angel " Inn, to prevent them entering his premises, brought or rolled out his barrels of beer himself, and by this means saved himself and his house.

During the time they invested the houses in Bardney, the people were so frightened that they gave them anything they asked for ; the navvies went about to the inhabitants of

the village demanding money and different articles from them, and proclaiming their own prices for provisions for the future; John Edmonds, now living (1881), gave them five shillings.

The constable of the village was called out, but he alone was of no use, as they would have attacked him at once; he made his escape with difficulty, and was obliged to hide himself in the almshouses; thirteen constables were sent for from Horncastle, they also were useless, and had to go home again,—one of them so much injured that he died from the effects afterwards; the cavalry were then sent for, and came as soon as possible (either on Saturday or Sunday morning,) with the magistrate, the Rev. Mr. Mouncey, of Gautby, who read the Riot Act. The rioters (several of whom secreted themselves) were immediately surrounded by the cavalry, who drove them up together and examined them, afterwards they filled three carts and a waggon with the rioters, whom they carried away with them to Horncastle and Spilsby; in due course these disturbers were prosecuted and imprisoned.

Sometime after the Bardney Riot, the main works of the River Witham were suspended at a point opposite the Woad Houses or Five-Mile House, but the South Delph, as ordered to be made by the Act, was then commenced and carried forward from Horsley Deeps Lock, on the south side of the River Witham Bank, to the Junction at the elbow of the Sincil Dyke at Lincoln, which at that time had its outfall into the River Witham; the distance from the elbow to the Witham was eight chains, or one hundred and seventy-six yards; and five chains, seventy links, or one hundred and twenty-eight yards in length from the same point to the east corner of the present Melville Street; the Sincil Dyke then ran west from the junction of the elbow to the corner of Elder Lane (now the south corner of Sincil Street), it then turned at right angles, and ran straight to the South Common.

The Great Gowts Drain in Lincoln was enlarged and scoured out in 1813, and the Bridge was built over it, in the High Street, as now standing.

The tunnel under the River Witham, at the head of the Great Gowts Drain, was constructed about the same time, for the purpose of draining the low lands west of Lincoln.

Previous to this date the low lands in Boultham, Skellingthorpe, and Burton, were flooded for a great part of every year. After the construction of this Sluice, however, a Main Drain was cut in connection with it through the low lands of Boultham and Skellingthorpe (passing on its way through the large standing pool known as “The Swanpool”) to

a point where the River Till enters the Possdyke. No doubt the intention was to construct a tunnel beneath the Foss Dyke here to convey the waters of the Till into the Lower Witham, by means of this main drain and the culvert beneath the Upper Witham. This design was however never entirely carried out. Another drain was also cut, branching off from the main drain about half-a-mile beyond the Sluice, this was carried through the low lands of Burton and Broxholme, and uttered its waters by means of a culvert under the Foss Dyke. This district contained three Decoys, two in Burton and one in Skellingthorpe,—the latter was worked up to the year 1810 by Mr. Benjamin Johnson. In connection with the ducks caught in these Decoys, it is said that certain epicures in London *claimed* to be able to tell by the flavour of the birds whether they were caught at Burton or at Skellingthorpe.

The Works of the River Witham, which had been suspended near the Woad Honses, or Five Mile House, were resumed again in 1826, under a Contract to the late Jephtha Gresham, of Washingborough, and the first stone of the new Lock at Stamp End, was laid in this year; the Contractor being Mark Favill, of Aincotts, in the Isle of Axholme; soon after the completion of these Works, the Company lined the sides of the River Witham from that Lock to the High Bridge with Bramley Fall Stone, and fenced it with a high post-and-rail fence, as now standing; before this was done, the sides of the river through the town were in a dilapidated state, full of holes, frightful to look at, and the cause of many people being drowned. Through the neglect of the authorities, people had been allowed to build too near the river.

About the year 1826, the Company altered and enlarged the Sineil Dyke; commencing at the junction of the elbow mentioned before, they ran it for a short distance westward; then by a curve cutting off the old dyke and bridge, and erecting a new bridge in the curve leading into the present street, called Oxford Street. The enlarging of the Sineil Dyke was carried on to the Canwick or South Common, and so on to the High Street, the Drain being carried south of the old course; they carried the work on to a Dam at the Upper Witham, and soon after built the new Weir, as now standing, called “The Bargate Weir.”

Whilst thus enlarging the Sineil Dyke, a fine old stone bridge was pulled down; the north approach of this bridge was flanked by two large towers, which is sufficient evidence that this was originally an important entrance into the city, when packhorses were the rule and vehicles the exception. The road passing from the South Common and the Malander over this bridge, led into High Street, north of St. Botolph's church.

The towers stood in the city wall, which extended eastward from this point, following the old course of the Sincil Dyke, until it reached the Witham; the city wall also extended westward from the other tower.

WEST AND WILDMORE FENS.

It is fair to suppose that Sir Anthony Thomas and his coadjutors built the Maudfoster Sluice, below Boston, in the Parish of Skirbeck, and cut the Maudfoster Drain, intersecting the high road leading from Sibsey to Boston, and then by the side of an ancient road to the entrance of the West Fen at Cow Bridge, which bridge stood over the ancient Hill Dyke Drain, at which there was a gate to prevent the cattle coming down to Boston, as also the cows coming there to be milked,—hence the name “Cow Bridge.” The Maudfoster Drain intersected the Hill Dyke Drain, and was extended on northward to a bend in the Medlam Drain, 200 chains in length.

The Medlam Drain at that time had its outfall into the River Witham at a place near to a point now called Anthony’s Gowl, two-and-a-half miles above Boston; before the execution of this work, the tides had free course up the Medlam Drain, flooding a great part of the West Fen, and extending sometimes even to Revesby Fen Gate; but after a drain had been constructed, the tides were prevented from flowing up the drain in question. The line of this part of the Medlam Drain may be traced at the present time; it was very crooked and, by the friction of the tides, worn into great corners and pools, plainly visible at the time of the Inclosure of the Fen in 1810.

Sir Anthony recommenced his work by constructing a Catchwater Drain at the point called Cow Bridge, up to and along Sibsey Fen-side, nearly as far as North Dyke Bridge; he continued the same along the West Fen-side of Stickney, through a large pool called “Gote Syke Drye,” and by a curve to Hagnaby Fen-corner; by a second curve he passed through the high ground of Thistle Hill, continuing it to the Fen-side boundary of Kirkby and Revesby, at a place called “Hemp Garth,” where a strong stream of water came down from the high land. As far as this Drain went it was well adapted for its intended purpose. The Engineer for the Drainage of the Fens at the Inclosure in 1810, adopted nearly the same line as that before-mentioned, as far as Thistle Hill, but, beyond that, he carried his line a distance from Kirkby Fen-side to a projecting corner in the boundary of Revesby lordship; passing the Fen Gate at Revesby, he cut through the “Severals” (which had previously

been taken from the Fen,) to Tumby Wood-side, and by the side of the same to a place called “Hawthorne Hill,” near Dogdyke.

Sir Anthony’s next work was the Twelve-foot Drain. Commencing at the Medlam Drain, he carried it to Hagnaby Corner; this work passed through some of the highest and lowest land in the West Fen.

After this, Sir Anthony commenced operations in the Wildmore Fen by cutting the “Newham Drain,” beginning at the Fen side of Mareham-le-Fen, and carrying it down between the boundaries of the West and Wildmore Fens until it joined the Witham near the place where the Medlam Drain fell into the same; here Sir Anthony built a stop sluice, which preserves his Christian name to this day, being called “Anthony’s Sluice;” he then cut the How Bridge Drain, starting from a point near to Dogdyke, taking it on by the north of Hundle House, and then by a bend into the Newham Drain,—these two appear to have been the principal drains of the Wildmore Fen.

The Barlode Drain was Sir Anthony’s next work; beginning at the Bolingbroke Brook at Hagnaby Corner, and turning it between the Fen and the west side of Stickford lordship for some distance, and then through the rising ground, called “Stickney Bar Green,” to one of the East Fen Pools, called “Stock Water;” this drain he constructed for the purpose of preventing the stream of water coming down from Bolingbroke going into the West Fen, which was its ancient course; the portion of the West Fen overflowed by this stream was very low, and the land of very poor quality. At the Inclosure of the Fens, the Commissioners had the Barlode Drain improved at Hagnaby Corner, by carrying it in a curve through Stickford Ings for a certain distance, as may plainly be seen on inspection.

EAST FEN.

Having remarked upon the Wildmore, West, and Holland Fens, and the carrying out of the several Acts of Parliament relating to the River Witham, we now commence upon the East Fen.

The following are the names of the parishes bordering on the East Fen, commencing at Stickney Bar Green, and proceeding northward, viz.: Stickford, West Keal, East Keal, Toynton All Saints, Toynton St. Peter’s, Halton, Little Steeping, Hagnaby, Thorpe, Wainfleet St. Mary, Friskney, Wrangle, Leake, Sibsey, Stickney, and part of the West Fen.

This Fen has been a morass and bog from the earliest times, having a border of firm land on the edge of it next the old Inclosures. Large pools of stagnant water were dispersed about over this Fen; in Dugdale's time they numbered sixty-one, including smaller pools at different points of the large pools themselves (see Plan No. 5.) Their names were as follows, viz. :—

No. 1. Stockwater.	No. 21. Coot Mouth Hole.	No. 41. Matlade Flottons.
2. Groope.	22. Wash Ballock.	42. Yewell Water.
3. Kealecote Sykes.	23. Hart's Booze.	43. The Skires.
4. Stickford Sykes.	24. Gibburne Nuke.	44. Cow Mouth.
5. Rogger.	25. Gowple.	45. Robb Water.
6. Popple Poole.	26. Durlmouth.	46. Middle Water.
7. Keale Haven.	27. Salter Gate.	47. Dobbin.
8. Mose Water.	28. Gasp Water.	48. North Lade.
9. Steven Water.	29. Burnt Meere.	49. Fackwater.
10. Fisherbind Hole.	30. Burnt Meere Holes.	50. King's Fishing.
11. Little Park Croft.	31. Ell Lade.	51. Smith Mike.
12. Great Park Croft.	32. Fair Fishes, S.	52. South Lade.
13. Muggill.	33. Fair Fishes, N.	53. Bill Water.
14. Great Goodin.	34. Emholme.	54. Billwater Clotton.
15. Girdle Gate.	35. Thorowfare.	55. Madghill Water.
16. Cherry Hume.	36. Keale Dikes, W.	56. Goodin Draughts.
17. Long Water.	37. Keale Dikes, E.	57. Beane Sike.
18. Brightey.	38. Swinham Lade.	58. Leake Meere.
19. Bamb Weare.	39. Domine.	59. Starr Gate.
20. Silver Pitt.	40. Matlade.	60. Kyme Pitts.

And No. 61. Small Pitts ;

These last were not considerable, and adjoined Lade Bank in Sibsey and Wrangle. When the Fen was enclosed, about 1810, the pools were partly grown up, and reduced to the number of twenty (see No. 3 Plan), that is of pools themselves,—exclusive of separate numbers to the permanent parts of the pools (as in Dugdale.) The names were as follows, viz. :

No. 1.	Stockwater.	No. 8.	Pay Croft.	No. 15.	Domine.
2.	Stickford Syke.	9.	Goodwin.	16.	Goup Hole.
3.	Steven Water.	10.	Long Water.	17.	Hemholme.
4.	Kealcote Syke.	11.	Stargate Hole.	18.	Middle Water.
5.	Rogger.	12.	Arch Booze.	19.	Gass Water.
6.	Keale Haven.	13.	Keal Dykes.	20.	Bell Water.
7.	Silver Pit.	14.	Swinham Lade.		

These pools were all connected by “ Havens ” or “ Rows,” viz. :

No. 1, was called North Dyke or Wydale Row.

2, Stickney Fen-side Row.

These two were connected with the Goodwin Pool.

3, was the Hagnaby Brook or Row, connected with the Stockwater Pool.

4, the Row connecting Stockwater and Stickford Syke.

5, Stickford Row.

6, East Keal Row, connected with the Rogger Pool.

7, Low Toynton, connected with Keal Haven and Silver Pitt.

8, Low Toynton, connected Hemholme Sears with Middle Water, North Lade, Bell Water, &c.

9, Haven connecting Low Toynton with Bogg Water.

10, connecting Halton Fen-side with Bogg Water.

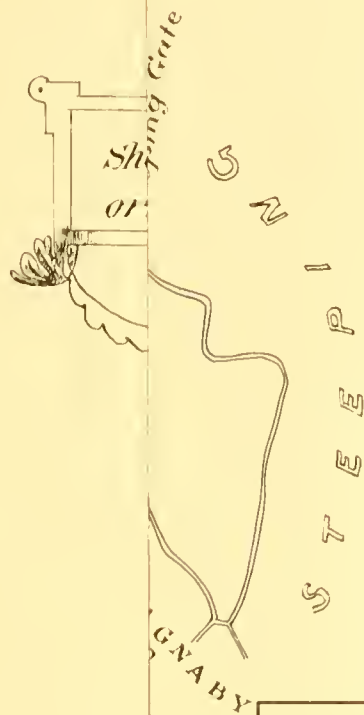
11, connecting Halton with Steeping Row.

12, connecting Steeping with Middle Water.

13, connecting Thorpe with North Lade.

14, connecting Thorpe with Bell Water, and Bell Water is connected with Gass Water.

It will be seen from this list that the whole of the pools were connected by means of these rows, and it was a pleasant excursion, in summer time, to row from pool to pool, through the entire course. The centre of each was quite free from weeds, and although the mud was three feet deep, yet above it there was from three to four feet in depth of singularly pellucid water, in fact so clear that the “ stroke ” of a pike running across the pools could be seen for a considerable distance ; so clear and shallow was the water, that a person in a boat could, with a hay-fork, spear the large bream that were passing.



North Dyke Bridge
S
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Reference

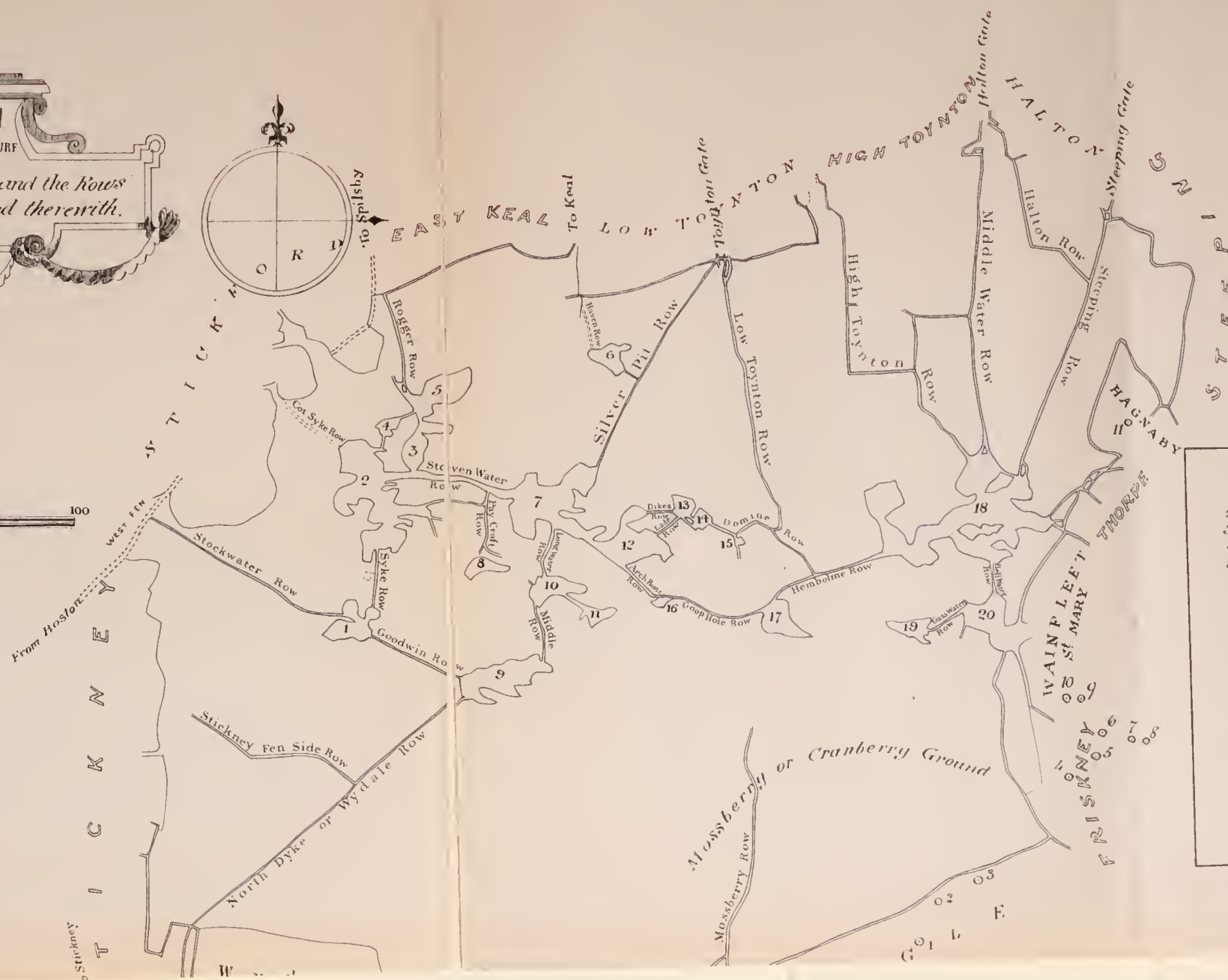
- 1 Stock Water
- 2 Stickford Syke
- 3 Steven Water
- 4 Kealote Syke
- 5 Rogger
- 6 Keal Haven
- 7 Silver Pit
- 8 Jay Croft
- 9 Goodwin
- 10 Long Water
- 11 Sturgate Hole
- 12 Arch Boaze
- 13 Keel Dikes
- 14 Swinham Lead
- 15 Domete
- 16 Coop Hole
- 17 Hem holme
- 18 Middle Water
- 19 Grass Water
- 20 Bell Water

EAST FEN

PLAN BEFORE THE INCLOSURE
IN 1810

*Shewing the ancient Deeps and the Rows
or Boatings thereto connected therewith.*

SCALE
50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100
48 chains to 1 Inch



Reference

- 1 Stock Water
- 2 Stickford Syke
- 3 Steven Water
- 4 Kealote Syke
- 5 Rogger
- 6 Keal Haven
- 7 Silver Pit
- 8 Lay Croft
- 9 Goodwin
- 10 Long Water
- 11 Stargate Hole
- 12 Arch Doore
- 13 Keal Dikes
- 14 Smeham Lade
- 15 Domes
- 16 Coop Hole
- 17 Hemholme
- 18 Middle Water
- 19 Grass Water
- 20 Bell Water

List of Devoys in 1807

1. Mr. A. K. Williams
2. J. J. Williams
3. Richard Alford
4. J. J. Williams
5. Richard Skelton
6. Geo. Skelton & Co.
7. Thomas Dadds
8. Thomas Dadds
9. William Bell
10. Daniel. Martins
11. Thomas Dadds
12. An. Ancient Decoy
in LEANE.

The margins of both pools and rows were shaded by a thick border of reeds, generally from seven to eight feet in height. A peculiar feature in this Fen was the "hassock." The eddying of the currents formed numberless little columns of earthy matter, which by continual accretion acquired a certain amount of solidity; when the head of the column once reached the surface, it was speedily covered with vegetation, the down-shooting roots of which supplied an additional element of elastic cohesion. An active person could step from one of these hassocks to another for a considerable distance, but, as they swayed to and fro, an amount of caution was necessary to escape a floundering.

In the summer season, when the water had drained off or been evaporated, the surface of large districts was exposed, which speedily bore a strong crop of coarse grass, called "fodder." Every persons having a right in this Fen, had the privilege of employing two labourers, and with them would go down into the Fen on the evening before Midsummer-day, and lie down until they heard the report of a gun which was fired exactly at twelve o'clock (midnight); then each party would arise and set to work. By common agreement, all the "fodder" they could mow a path around became the frontager's own property. After completing one circle, each party hastened to find fresh ground to encircle in like manner, as long as any remained unclaimed, after which they completed at leisure the mowing of those parts they had surrounded. When the reaping was over, the "fodder" was gathered up, and boated away by the different rows to the fenside, from whence it was carted to their homes.

This unwritten law was rigidly observed, and whenever one of them accidentally trenched upon another's "balk," he immediately withdrew; a narrow row of grass was usually left standing to mark the boundary of each person's temporary property. Usually, too, each frontager secured a sufficiently large stack to serve his cows and other cattle through the winter.

Much fuel was collected from this Fen, but it was obtained in a different state to that raised in the other Fens, being dug in large squares out of a solid peat, in a similar manner to that in which peat is gathered in Ireland; when ready for use it formed a splendid fuel.

In addition to the deeps and rows which remained in the summer, the whole Fen was covered by water in the winter, partly owing to the reception of a stream of water by the brook from the two Toyntons, and still more perhaps owing to the neglect of the White

Cross Sluice, by which, as will be seen on reference to *Grundy's 1774 Report*, more water escaped from the Steeping River into the Fen than went down the Wainfleet Haven.

The birds of this Fen, in addition to ducks and geese, were the bustard and the bittern.

We will now notice the ancient Outfalls of the East Fen, beginning with the Hill Dyke Drain. Before the Maudfoster was cut, the Hill Dyke Drain had its outlet into the old River Witham at a place called New Gotes, about two miles above Boston, which may still be discerned in the old line of the River ; this Drain commenced at the south side of the East Fen, and came down the boundary between Sibsey and Leake, across a road leading from Sibsey to Benington, with a bridge over the same, still called Benington Bridge ; it then continued to Hill Dyke Bridge, on the main road leading from Sibsey to Boston, from whence it was carried into the River Witham, as mentioned before.

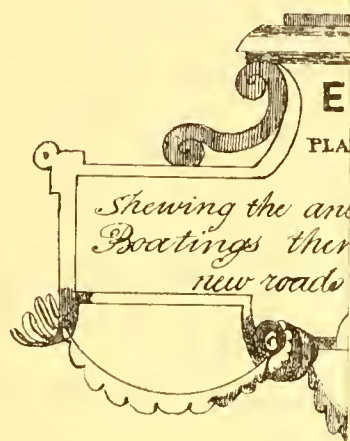
This Drain must have been of great importance, as it appears to have drained a great part of the East Fen, and particularly a large pool called Leake Meere, as well as the low grounds on the west side of Leake, Leverton, Benington, and Butterwick, probably it was improved by Sir Anthony Thomas, or by the Commissioners of Sewers.

When the Maudfoster Drain was cut, as mentioned in the account of the West Fen, it intersected the Hill Dyke Drain at a place called Cow Bridge, cutting off that part of the Hill Dyke Drain which ran between that point and the Witham, and at the Inclosure of the Fens in 1810, a new Drain was cut to improve the Drainage of the Wildmore and West Fens, to join the Hobhole New Drain, which thus became the Outfall of the Hill Dyke Drain.

About that time the great Hobhole Drain was constructed to drain the East Fen into the River Witham at Hobhole, which Drain ran in the line of the Hill Dyke from the Fen to Benington Bridge, and, of course, cut off the use of that part of the Drain.

The next Outlet for draining the East Fen was in the Parish of Friskney ; it led from the East Fen Deepes to the sea, through the Black Gote, which had four doors.

The next and greatest Outlet was at Wainfleet Haven, being brought from the East Fen Deepes ; it was joined by the Steeping River, at a place called White Cross Gotes, which had twelve doors ; from thence to Wainfleet, and through Wainfleet to the sea, where there were two sluices with six doors, (see Dugdale.)



HALTON

E
PLA

Steeping Gate

to Grimsby.

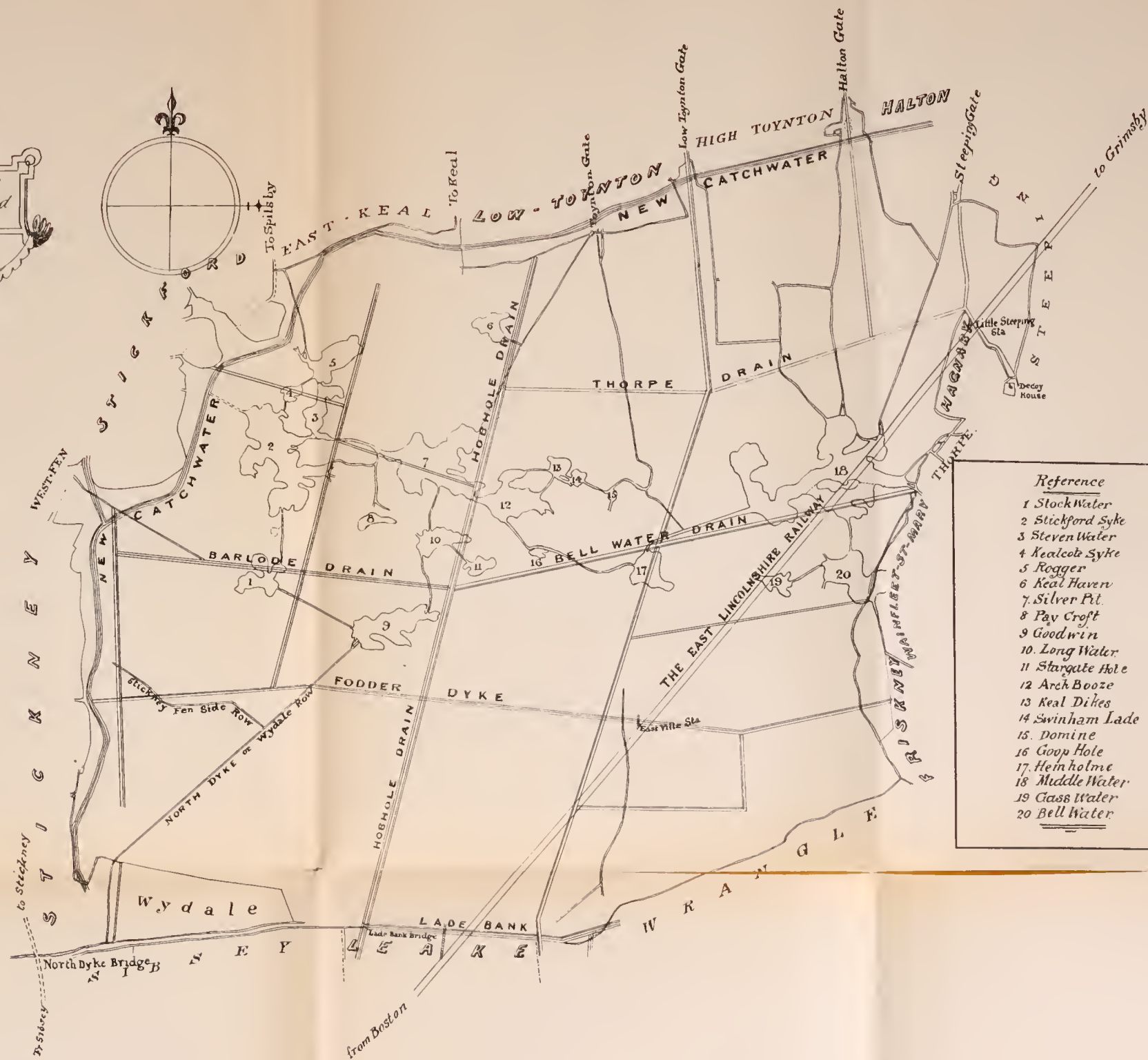
Little Steeping
Sta.
Decoy
House
HAGNABY
THORPE

Reference.

50 40 30 20 10

PLAN AFTER THE INCLOSURE
IN 1810

IN 1810
 Shewing the ancient deeps and the Rows, or
 Boatings thereto also the Hot-hole Drain and
 new roads laid out at that time.



It is evident that the carrying out of these great Works would cost a large sum of money, but this must have been furnished by Sir Anthony Thomas's co-contractors, viz. : John Worsop, Esq., Henry Briggs, M.A., and Hildebrand Pruson, as it is alleged in the Petition to the House of Commons by the Owners and Commoners, against the claims of the heir of Sir Anthony, that he, " Sir Anthony Thomas, at the time of the undertaking was not a person fitted for such employment, he being then of a mean Estate, and a prisoner in the Fleet for debt; and by this project endeavoured to repair his ruined fortunes, though with the ruin and undoing of thousands of families and impoverishment of the country." (*Thompson's History of Boston*, p. 631.) In the heir's Petition to the House of Lords, he states that the Contractors had spent Thirty thousand pounds in the works in addition to a further sum of Twenty thousand pounds in building, stocking, draining and inclosing the lands they had taken as payment. He states that the works were commenced 1631, and declared complete 16th June, 1634, although four full years had been stipulated for. He complains that after the Contractors had quietly enjoyed their reclaimed property for seven years, the Commoners repented of their bargain,—seeing how greatly the land had become enhanced in value, so " That afterward some of the country, finding that done of which they themselves despaired, made several clamours; but finding no relief in time of peace, they resolved to try if force and violence might compass that which neither justice nor reason could give; and to that end (a little before Edgehill fight, 1642), they being incensed by some then in faction, take arms, and in a riotous manner (notwithstanding several orders of the Lords' House of Parliament for quieting the possessions, and the sheriff endeavouring to preserve the possessions being beaten), they fell upon the said adventurers, broke their sluices, laid waste their lands, threw in their fences, spoiled their corn, demolished their houses, and have ever since as unjustly detained what at first they as forcibly got." (*Thompson's History of Boston*, p. 630.)

After all it appears that the commoners were eventually successful, as is shown by a Petition presented by them to the House of Commons in 1662, wherein they state " that from that time your petitioners did, and have enjoyed their respective commons." A letter from Sir William Killigrew, dated June 25, 1653, states that " My Lord Generall Cromwell should saye the drayninge of the fens was a good worke, but that the drayners had too greate a proportion of land for their hazard and charges, and that the poore were not enough provided for, and that the drayners did not pay for the land which they had cutt through." When such was Cromwell's opinion there could be little hope for the Contractors retaining

their “severals.” It seems, however, that Cromwell’s opinions had been modified from those he held at an earlier date, as in 1638, he strenuously and successfully opposed the scheme of the Earl of Bedford for draining the Fens of Lincolnshire and the Isle of Ely,—a measure which was very unpopular with the commonalty, so, by his opposition to it, he gained for himself many friends and the name of “Lord of the Fens.” (Noble’s *Cromwell*, vol. i., p. 103.)

Large tracts of land were appropriated by Sir Anthony and his coadjutors, the Commons’ Petition before quoted says that they had taken ten thousand acres of the East Fen, five thousand acres of the West Fen, and one thousand three hundred acres of Armetree and Wildmore Fens, and, according to their own rates, the Contractors had made in the seven years of their possession a profit of fifty-seven thousand pounds, “which is” (say the Commons) “more than they *pretend* to have expended (fifty thousand pounds), and many thousand pounds more than was really laid out.”

The Ordnance Map shows the extent of one of these tracts by a boundary line; it commenced at Leake Common Bank, crossed the course of the present Hob Hole Drain at Seminary House Bridge, ran along Leake Common Fen-side to Wrangle Bank, and then along that Bank to the Common Drain which turned up by Friskney Row to Black Gote,—this piece of land includes that which is now called “Hunston’s Charity; probably all the land to the north of this line had been reclaimed in ancient times. These “Severals” are now part of the parishes of Leake, Wrangle, and Friskney.

A large “Several” was formed out of the Fen at High Toynton, and doubtless much valuable land was so taken of which there is now no record.

Among the portions of the West Fen taken were: the Firth Bank Inclosure, West Houses, Medlam, Moor Houses, and a considerable tract on the north of the Fen, now called Revesby Low Grounds or “Severals.”

In Wildmore Fen,—Mere Booth, Langrick Ferry Inclosure, the Hermitage, Newham, Frog Hall, and Hundle House, are the only portions clearly shown to have been appropriated.

In referring to the East Fen, an admirable work by Mr. Oldfield, published in 1829, and entitled *An Account of Wainfleet and the Wapentake of Candleshoe*, contains the following:

“Great as are the advantages arising from the inclosure and drainage, they have in some measure been counterbalanced, as it respects this parish, by the loss sustained by the

- PLAN - OF - A - DUCK - DECOY -

— *situate at* —

KELLINGTHORPE - NEAR - LINCOLN

— MARCH - 1846. —



400 Feet

decoys, and the almost total failure of the cranberry harvest. Friskney was at one time noted for the number and magnitude of its decoys, and for the immense quantity of wild fowl caught in them ; London was at that period principally supplied with ducks, wigeon and teal, from the decoys in this neighbourhood. In one season, a few winters prior to the enclosure of the Fens, ten decoys, five of which were in this parish, furnished the astonishing number of thirty-one thousand two hundred, for the markets of the metropolis. Since the inclosure the number caught has been comparatively small. Only three decoys remain, two in Friskney and one in Wainfleet St. Mary's, and the decoymen consider five thousand birds as a good season."

A decoy also existed in Leake, another (as mentioned in the previous paragraph) in Wainfleet St. Mary's ; another was located on a small Intake in the East Fen, where there was formerly a cell attached to Hagnaby Priory. It may here be noticed that Wyedale in the East Fen is supposed to have had a cell attached to Revesby Abbey, and this would account for Wyedale forming a part of Revesby parish, notwithstanding that it is separated from the parish church by a distance, as the crow flies, of about four miles.

A graphic description of a decoy is supplied in an Appendix to Mr. Oldfield's Work, from which we have already quoted.

DESCRIPTION OF DECOYS.

"There is perhaps no subject connected with the natural history of this kingdom, of which published accounts are more erroneous, than those which are contained even in standard works, of the manner in which wild fowl are taken in decoys. The following description of the mode practised in this neighbourhood, is principally taken from *Gregory's Cyclopædia*, *Art. Decoy* ; the errors corrected and deficiencies supplied from the communications of Mr. William Skelton, Decoy, Friskney.

"A decoy is generally made where there is a large pond surrounded with wood, and beyond that a marshy and uncultivated country ; if the pool is not thus surrounded it will be attended with noises and other accidents, which may be expected to frighten the wild fowl from a quiet haunt, where they mean to sleep in the daytime in security. If these noises or disturbances are wilful, it has been held that an action will lie against the disturber.

PLAN - OF - A - DUCK - DECOY -
situate at
SKELLINGTHORPE - NEAR - LINCOLN

MARCH - 1846.



Scale of Feet



As soon as the evening sets in, the decoy rises, and the wild fowl proceed to the coast, to feed during the night. If the evening is still, the noise of their wings in flying is heard at a great distance, and is a pleasing, though rather a melancholy, sound. This rising of the decoy in the evening, is in Somersetshire called “radding;” in this county, “flight.”

“The decoy ducks are fed with hempseed and various other descriptions of seed, which are so light as to float on the surface of the water; this is thrown over the screens in small quantities to bring them forwards into the pipes or canals, and to allure the wild fowl to follow. The number of the pipes, as they are termed, varies from four to six, according to the size of the pond: it is necessary to have one for almost every wind that may blow, as upon this circumstance it depends which pipe the fowl will take to. Over these pipes which grow narrower from their first entrance, is a continued arch of netting, suspended upon hoops, which terminates in a funnel net. It was formerly customary for the decoyman to keep on the leeward side of the ducks, to prevent his scent reaching their sagacious nostrils. If circumstances require it, however, the decoyman now approaches them on the windward side also, without any danger of disturbing the birds, taking with him a small portion of burning turf, upon which he occasionally breathes. All along each pipe are screens made of reeds, having openings in them at intervals, which are so situated that it is impossible the wild fowl should see the decoyman, before they have passed on to the end of the pipe where the purse net is placed. The inducement to the wild fowl to go up one of those pipes is, because the decoy ducks, enticed by the seeds thrown over the screens, lead the way.

“It often happens however that the wild fowl are in such a state of drowsiness, that they will not follow the decoy ducks. Recourse is then had to a small dog, who has been trained up for the purpose, who passes backwards and forwards through the openings in the reed fence. This attracts the attention of the wild fowl, who, not choosing to be interrupted, advance towards the small and contemptible animal, that they may drive him away. The dog, all the time, by the direction of the decoyman, plays among the screens of reeds, nearer and nearer the purse net; receiving every time he appears, a small quantity of cheese, as an encouragement to proceed; until the decoyman suddenly makes his appearance from behind the screens in the rear of the ducks, and the wild fowl not daring to pass by him in return, nor being able to escape upwards on account of the net covering, rush on into the purse net.

“The fowls taken in these decoys, are principally the Wild Duck, or Mallard, the *Anas Boschas* of Linnæus ; the Teal, or *Anas Creca* ; and the *Anas ferina*, Pochard or Red-headed Wigeon of Ray.

“The last species is known in the London markets by the name of Dun Birds, and are esteemed excellent eating.

“The general season for catching fowl in decoys, is from the end of October until February ; the taking them earlier is prohibited by an Act passed 10 Geo. II., c. 32, which forbids it, from June 1st to October 1st, under the penalty of five shillings for each bird destroyed within that space.

“It was customary formerly to have in the Fens an annual driving of the young ducks before they took wing ; numbers of people assembled, who beat a vast tract, and forced the birds into a net, placed at the spot where the sport was to terminate. Thus a hundred and fifty dozens have been taken at once, but this practice, being supposed detrimental, has been abolished by Act of Parliament.”

Mr. Oldfield refers in the same work to another source of income supplied by a portion of the Fens even so lately as the date of his writing (1829).—

“A principal part of that portion of the Fens which appertained to Friskney parish, was denominated the Mossberry or Cranberry Fen, from the quantity of cranberries which grew upon it, in its wild and uncultivated state, the soil—a deep peat moss—being admirably calculated for their growth ; it was not, however, until the commencement of the last century that their value, as a luxurious article of food, was at all known in this parish, when they were brought into use by a native of Westmoreland, in which county and Cumberland, great numbers are annually gathered.

“After that period and until the Drainage of the Fens (about 1810), the quantity gathered yearly in this place was very great.

“In some years, when the season was favourable, as many as four thousand pecks have been collected, but the average quantity was about two thousand pecks.

“The general price paid to those who picked them, was five shillings per peck ; those who purchased them, disposed of them principally in Cambridgeshire, Lancashire and York-

shire, for the making the well-known “cranberry tarts;” since the Drainage and Inclosure few have been gathered, and those few have sold from thirty to fifty shillings per peck.”

Young, in his *Agricultural Survey of the County of Lincoln, in 1799*, records that “There are about three hundred acres of land in the East Fen where cranberries grow in such abundance as to furnish a supply for several adjacent counties; the land is chiefly Common, belonging to Wainfleet and Friskney.

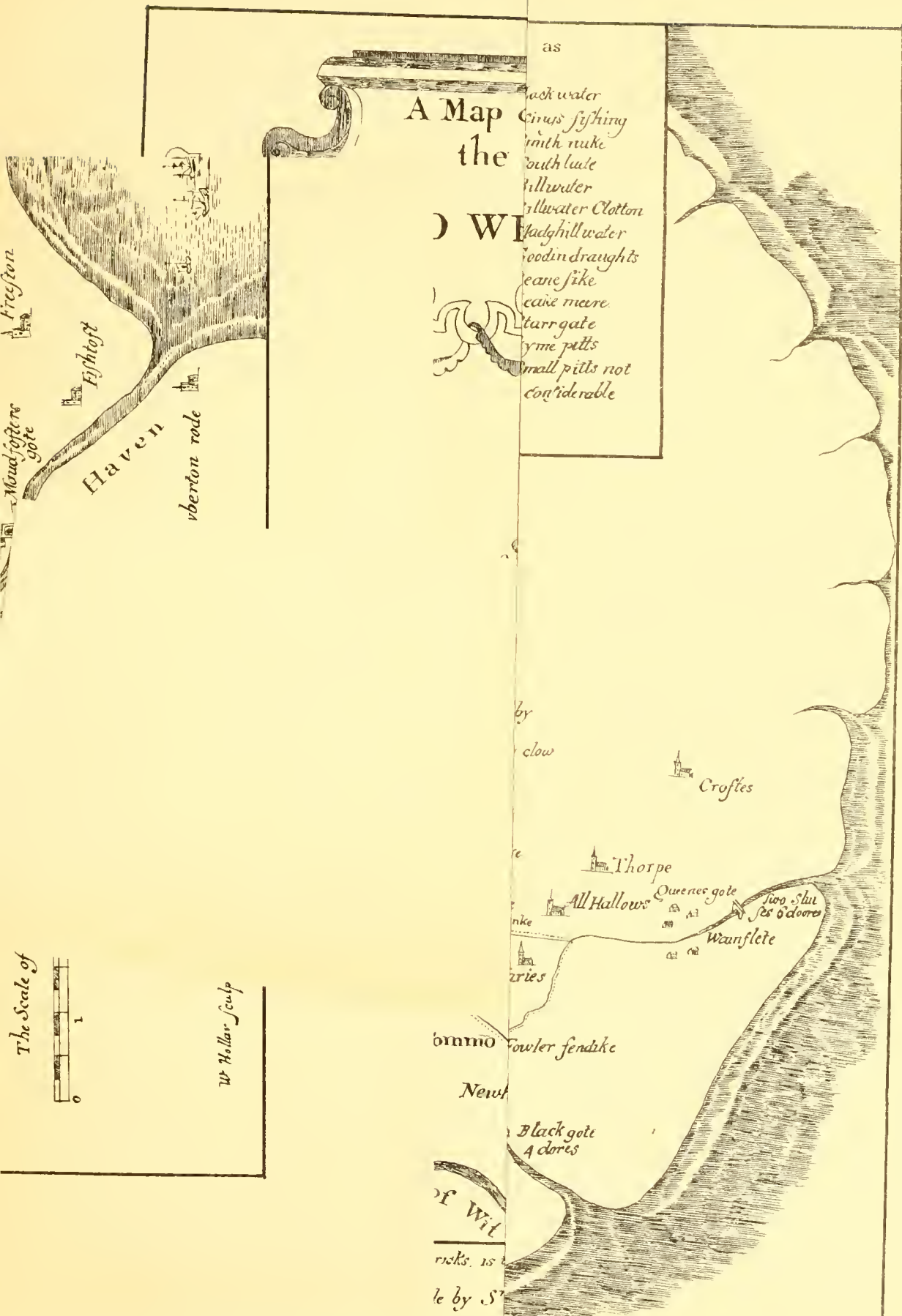
“*Empetrum*, and several other mountain plants, are found upon the cranberry ground and in no other part of the Fens; they are so plentiful, that one man has got nine-score pecks in a season.”

It would be impossible to get a clear idea of the condition of the East and West Fens without the perusal of Dugdale's minute account, which being somewhat rare, the author deems it advisable to extract:—

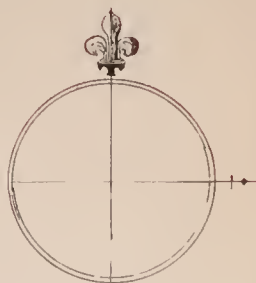
THE EAST AND WEST FENS.

“Northwards of this femy part of the country, called Lindsey Level, are divers other marshes, lying towards Waynflete, the greatest whereof are called by the name of the East and West Fens.

“Upon a writ of *Ad quod dampnum*, in 41 Eliz. concerning the draining of these Fens, it appears that the East Fen (lying betwixt the parts of Holand and Lindsey) was found to contain five thousand acres, or thereabouts; and that the one half thereof, being the skirt, hills, and out-rings, might conveniently be drained; but the other half, consisting of deeps for the most part, could not be recovered; and moreover, that the commons and severals pertaining to the towns confining on the said Fen did then amount to the number of three thousand and four hundred acres, or thereabouts; all which were at that time surrounded. Whether any thing was done at that time towards the draining of those Fens, I am not able to say; but in 6 Caroli, 15 Maii, there was a decree made in a session of sewers, held at Boston, by Robert Earl of Lindsey Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Edward Earl of Dorset Lord Chamberlain to the Queen, John Shorey Mayor of Boston, Sir Robert Killegrew Vice-chamberlain to the Queen, Sir Robert Belle Sir John Browne, knights, Robert Callice Serjeant at Law, and others; which decree makes this following recital, viz.



A Map of the EAST AND WEST FENNE



The names of all such Deepes in the East Fenne, as
containe any quantities of water

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Stock Water | 17 Long Water | 33 Faire Fijhes N. | 49 Luckwater |
| 2 Goope | 18 Brighter | 34 Emholme | 50 Linnus fying |
| 3 Kealecote sikes | 19 Bumb weare | 35 Thorow fare | 51 Smith nuke |
| 4 Stickford sikes | 20 Silver pitl | 36 Keale dikes W | 52 South lade |
| 5 Kopper | 21 Cool mouth hole | 37 Keale dikes E | 53 Willwater |
| 6 Pyppe poole | 22 Wylh Ballock | 38 Swinham lade | 54 Brillwater Clotton |
| 7 Keale Hauen | 23 Harts Booze | 39 Dorrune | 55 Mouldmill water |
| 8 Major water | 24 Gibburne nuke | 40 Mallade | 56 Goodindraughts |
| 9 Steven water | 25 Gouple | 41 Mallade flottons | 57 Beane sike |
| 10 Fijher bind hole | 26 Durtmouth | 42 Jewell water | 58 Leake meere |
| 11 Little park croft | 27 Salter gate | 43 The Skires | 59 Starrgate |
| 12 Great park croft | 28 Gasp Water | 44 Cow mouth | 60 Hym patts |
| 13 Muggull | 29 Burnt meere | 45 Kobb water | 61 Small pits not
considerable |
| 14 Great Goodin | 30 Burnt meere holes | 46 Middle water | |
| 15 Girrle Gate | 31 Ell lade | 47 Dobbins | |
| 16 Cherry hurne | 32 faire Fijhes S | 48 North lade | |



that there was a law of sewers made at Boston, 7 and 9 Apr. then last past, by the said Sir Robert Bell and others, whereby it appeared that the grounds hereafter named were overflowed with fresh waters, viz. Dockdike lurne, from Armitage causey, and Howbriggs east, to the river of Witham, west; and from the said river of Wytham, south, to Hawthorne, north, from the east end of Hundell house grounds, and so along by Raydyke, to the north side of Moorhouse grounds; from thence, by Marcham, Revesby, east, Kirkby and Hagnaby, to Hagnaby gate; from thence along by Bar loade bank, and the west end of Stickney severals, to Stickney graunge: From thence on the north side of Westhouse grounds, along to Blacksyke; from thence on the north side of Medlam to Gamock stake; from thence directly to the east end of Hundel house grounds, from Stickney graunge, southwards, on the west side of the severals of Stickney and Nordyke gate, east, to Nordyke stream, south, and the West Fenne, west; wherein is included Westhouse grounds, the low grounds belonging to Stickney grange and Thornedales, from Norlands lane, along between Sibsey severals and the new drain to Hale causey; from thence along to the Shottels.

“And that all these grounds, as also the grounds mentioned in a verdict heretofore given up at a session of sewers, held at Boston aforesaid, 16 Jan. anno 1629, viz. the East Fenne, extending in length from the severals of Wainflet on the east, to the severals of Stickney on the west; and in breadth from the severals of Waynflet, Friskene, Wrangle, Leake, and Stickney on the south; and the severals of Stichford, Keales, Toynton, Halton, Steping, and Thorpe on the north, were for the most part surrounded grounds: And likewise that certain severals, and commons of divers lords and owners, belonging to Waynflet and Friskene, lying between a bank called Fendyke bank on the east, and Eastfen on the west; and abutting on the old drain called Symon gote, towards the south, and upon Thorpe Dales, towards the north, and certain severals of divers lords and owners belonging to Wrangle, lying between the said old drain called Symon gote on the east, and Leake severals on the west; and abutting upon Lade bank towards the north, and upon the old Fendike bank towards the south, were surrounded grounds most part of the year: And moreover, that the several grounds and commons of divers lords and owners belonging to Leake, lying betwixt the East Fen on the north, and the Outweare bank, on the south; and abutting upon Wrangle severals towards the east, and upon Sibsey Weare bank and Stickney Wydalls, towards the west; and the severals of divers lords and owners of grounds belonging to Stickney Wydalls, lying betwixt the East Fen of the east and

north, and abutting upon Valentine dyke towards the west, and upon a drain leading to Nordyke brigge towards the south, were surrounded grounds in the winter time.

“ And lastly, that the severals of certain lords and owners of grounds, belonging to Toyntons, next Spillesby, called the Demesns, lying between the East Fen on the south, and a certain meadow called the East Fen on the north, and abutting upon a drain called Toynton beek towards the east, and upon Hare hills towards the west, were surrounded grounds also for the winter season.

“ And that it was therefore decreed, that for and towards the natural outfall of Wainflet haven, Black gote, Symons gote, Maudfoster gote, New gote, and Anton gote, and all or part of the same ; as also any other antient drains as the undertakers should think or find most necessary to be used ; should be enlarged and made deeper, as need should require, with all other necessary works for draining of the said grounds, within the extent of the several recited commissions of sewers, bearing date as above is expressed : And that every acre of land and common mentioned in the said verdict, and expressed upon the said view, within the extent of the said commissions, to be overflown with fresh waters, which might receive benefit by the said draining should be taxed and charged with the sum of x^s the acre, to be paid at or before the xiiiith day of May then next coming, unto William Locton and Gervase Scroope esquires, or to any one of them ; the said tax being set upon the said lands and commons, to the end that if it should not be paid, the commissioners of sewers might be legally authorised to make bargain for land with Sir Anthony Thomas knt. and the rest of the undertakers ; and the said tax to remain in the hands, under the locks and keys of two of the said parties named, and two of the same undertakers, the sum being first certainly known to the said undertakers, by authority of the court to be ratably paid over to the said Sir Anthony Thomas and the rest of the undertakers, to be nominated by him, their heirs and assigns, after the said draining should be done wholly, or in part proportionable : And in default of such payment of the sums of x^s so assessed upon every acre, as abovesaid ; the said court, at a general session of sewers of six commissioners, whereof three to be of the Quorum, should set forth, decree, and establish, such proportion and portions of the said ground, for which the sums aforesaid were not paid unto the undertakers, their heirs and assigns, in recompence of the said draining.

“ And it was also farther ordered, by authority of that Court, that process should be awarded, *per curiam*, to the Shireeve of the County of Lincolne, or his deputy, requiring them

to give summons and knowledge, by way of proclamation, in all the market towns and fitting places for those parts, and within the extent of the said commissions ; that all lords, owners, commoners, and parties interested in any of the grounds aforesaid, might take and have notice thereof ; and that they should not fail to make return of the said process, at the several sessions of sewers, to be holden for those parts, at Boston aforesaid, the xvth of May then next upon xl^l penalty.

“ Which said decree the said Robert Earl of Lindsey, and other the commissioners of sewers before-specified, did ratify and confirm : And forasmuch as it appeared to them, that no part of the tax so assessed as aforesaid, was paid in unto the said Gervase Scroope and William Loeton, they proceeded in the execution of the said former decree, according to the true intent and meaning thereof, and according to his Majesty's directions formerly signified by his royal letters : And therefore, being credibly informed, that, for the effecting of the said works of draining of those surrounded grounds, one great and navigable stream and river ought to be cast from out of the said East Fenn and grounds ; and so leading from thence by the space of three miles, or thereabouts, unto the haven of Boston aforesaid : And that one or more very large gotes of stone and timber, and other materials requisite for the effecting of so great a work ought of necessity to be built, at the haven side ; and that many other petty sewers, gutters, and streams, should also be cast, to have their courses to the said main river, and many bridges built over the said streams, and other matters done, &c., at the only costs, &c. of Sir Anthony Thomas knight, John Worsop esquire, Henry Briggs master of arts, and Hildebrand Pruson, whom the said court did order to perform all those things, within the space of four years from the feast of S. Michael the Arch-angel then next coming ; which said Sir Anthony, John, &c. were thereupon appointed undertakers of the said works accordingly ; it being also decreed, that, in consideration of such their performance, their heirs and assigns, should have the one half of the said East Fenn ; as also a third part in three parts to be divided of all the said severals which lie in or adjoining to and upon the said East Fenn ; and, moreover, that he the said Sir Anthony and the rest of his fellow-undertakers, for the considerations aforesaid, should have a full fourth part in four parts to be divided of all the said surrounded grounds lying in the West Fenne, and in the said severals thereto adjoining, butted and bounded as aforesaid ; to have and enjoy in several after the said draining should be sufficiently compleated : All which parts to be set forth by six or more of the commissioners of sewers, presently after the said draining should be finished as aforesaid, in the most fit and convenient places of the said grounds,

whereby the owners and commoners of the other parts might hold and enjoy their several and respective interests, with the least prejudice, and to and for their best advantage.

“And the said commissioners did also decree, that, from and after the perfecting of this work of draining, the said lands so assigned to the before specified Sir Anthony Thomas and the rest of the undertakers and their heirs, should be bound by good and sufficient security, to and for the costs and charges to be expended for the perpetual maintenance of the said works; that is to say, one thousand five hundred acres, whereof five hundred acres of the said West Fenn to be part; and a thousand acres of the best grounds of the said East Fenn to be the rest, yearly to be let out, to the intent and purpose, that two thousand pounds might be levied and kept in the hands of the Mayor of Boston aforesaid, for the time being, to be employed for and about the repairs of the said works; and the profits of the said grounds to be to the use of the said undertakers, until the value of five hundred pounds should be spent in and about the repairs of the said works; and then the said profits to be employed and made two thousand pounds, to be bestowed from time to time upon the said works, for ever, when occasion should serve,

“Provided also, that the said undertakers should compound with the several owners and farmers of grounds, through which the said new stream, river, and gutters, were to pass, for setting and casting their works thereon and therein; and if the parties would not agree to take and accept of reasonable composition for the loss of their grounds, whereby the said public works should or might be hindered or interrupted; then that six commissioners of sewers should set rates and prices, and the times of payment; and provide for security for the same.

“And at another session of sewers, held at Boston aforesaid, upon the xvth of April, the next ensuing year, recital being made of the laws before-specified, and of the undertaking of the said Sir Anthony Thomas and his participants, there was another decree made; that, for their charges therein, they should not only have the one half of the said East Fen, and a third of all the severals adjoining thereto; and likewise the fourth part of all the surrounded grounds lying in the West Fen, and the severals thereto adjoining, limited and appointed to them by a former decree, but some farther augmentation in certain other particular places.

“Whereupon the said Sir Anthony and his participants began the work in September following, and prosecuted it with so much diligence, that at another session of sewers, held

likewise at Boston, upon the xvith of July, 10 Caroli, by Thomas Haughton esquire Mayor of the borough of Boston, Sir Raphe Maddison knight, Walter Norton, Richard Finsham, George Pulton, Rouland Hale, John Knight esquire, and Thomas Bedford gent.

“Upon their view of those late surrounded grounds, viz. East and West Fens, North Fen, Earles Fen, Armetre Fen, and Wildemore Fen, and other the drowned commons and adjacent surrounded several grounds, lying on the north and north east of the river of Witham, within the extent of the said commission, undertaken by Sir Anthony Thomas knight, and his participants, they adjudged the same to be so drained, as that they were fit for arable, meadow, or pasture: And that there was not above sixteen hundred seventy and three acres remaining drowned, of three thousand acres of pits, holes, deeps, and hollow places; (which were permitted to be left covered with waters) besides the rivers, drains, sewers, and water-courses, within the whole Level, undertaken by the said Sir Anthony and his associates, to be drained within four years not then expired until Michaelmas next following, according to the before-specified laws of sewers, made at Boston, xv Maii, 6 Caroli; and of another law of sewers, made likewise in pursuance thereof, at Boston aforesaid, xv Aprilis, 7 Caroli.

“And in another session of sewers, held also at Boston aforesaid, upon the xith of August the next ensuing year, recital being made of the former decrees, whereby the one half of the said East Fen, and a third part of the severals adjoining thereto; and a fourth part of the West Fen; as also the fourth part of all the surrounded grounds, as well several as common, formerly taxed, lying in the said West Fen, were decreed to the said Sir Anthony and his participants, for the draining thereof; the commisioners did fully ratify the same proportions, as they were then set out by particular metes and bounds.”—*From The History of Imbanking and Draining, by Sir Wm. Dugdale (1772 edition, p 420.)*





